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THE WORKS

OF

IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY

ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

MEMOIRS OF A SPORTSMAN

A NOBLEMAN'S NEST

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MEMOIRS OF A SPORTSMAN

(1852)

MEMOIRS OF A SPORTSMAN

I

KHOR AND KALÍNITCH

ANY one who has had occasion to pass from the Bolkhóff district to the Zhízdrin district, has, in all probability, been struck by the sharp difference between the races of people in the Governments of Orel[1] and Kalúga. The Orel peasant is small of stature, round-shouldered, surly, gazes askance from beneath his brows, lives in miserable huts of ash lumber, discharges husbandry-service for the lord of the manor, does not occupy himself with trading, eats bad food, and wears plaited slippers of linden bark; the Kalúga peasant, who pays the lord of the manor a quit-rent in lieu of personal husbandry-service, is tall of stature, his gaze is bold and merry, he is clean and white of face, he deals in butter and tar, and wears boots on festival days. An Orel village (we are speaking of the eastern part of the Orel Government) is generally situated in the midst of tilled fields, near a ravine somehow converted into a filthy pond. With

[1] Pronounced: Aryól.—TRANSLATOR.

the exception of a few willow-trees, which are always ready for service, and two or three puny birches, you will not see a tree for a verst round about; cottage clings close to cottage, the roofs are covered with rotten straw. . . . . A Kalúga village, on the contrary, is generally surrounded by a forest; the cottages stand further apart and more upright, and are covered with boards; the gates are fast locked, and the wattled fence round the back yard is not broken down, nor does it bulge outward, inviting a visit from every passing pig. . . . . And things are better for the huntsman, also, in the Kalúga Government. In the Orel Government, the forests and squares [1] will disappear within the next five years, and there is not a sign of a marsh; in the Kalúga Government, on the contrary, the clearings covered with a growth of bushes extend for hundreds, the marshes for scores, of versts,[2] and that noble game-bird the black-cock has not been exterminated, the amiable snipe abounds, and that busybody the partridge gladdens and startles both gunner and dog with its abrupt flight.

While visiting the Zhízdrin district, in the capacity of a sportsman, I met in the fields, and

[1] "Squares," in the Government of Orel, is the designation for vast, flat masses of bushes; the dialect of Orel is distinguished, as a whole, by a multitude of peculiar, sometimes very well-aimed, sometimes decidedly uncouth, words and turns of speech.—AUTHOR.

[2] A verst is two-thirds of a mile.—TRANSLATOR.

struck up an acquaintance with, a petty landed proprietor of Kalúga, Polutýkin, who was passionately fond of hunting and was, consequently, a splendid fellow. He had a few weaknesses, it is true: for example, he was in the habit of offering himself in marriage to all the wealthy marriageable girls in the Government, and when his hand and house were declined, with shattered heart he confided his grief to all his friends and acquaintances, but continued to send sour peaches and other unripe products of his garden to the parents of the marriageable girls; he was fond of repeating the selfsame anecdote over and over again, which, notwithstanding Mr. Polutýkin's reverence for its qualities, absolutely never made a single person laugh; he was in the habit of lauding the writings of Akím Nakhímoff and the novel "Pinna"; he stuttered; he called his dog Astronomer; he said *odnátche* instead of *odnáko* (but), and had set up in his house a French system of cookery, the secret whereof, according to his cook's understanding of the matter, consisted in completely altering the taste of every viand: meat, from the hands of this skilful artist, smacked of fish, fish tasted like mushrooms, macaroni like gunpowder; on the other hand, not a single carrot ever got into the soup, without having assumed the shape of a lozenge or a trapezium. But, with the exception of these few and insignificant failings, Mr.

Polutýkin was, as I have already said, a splendid fellow.

On the first day of my acquaintance with Mr. Polutýkin, he invited me to spend the night with him.

"It is about five versts to my house,"—he added:—"'t is a long way to trudge afoot; let us drop in first at Khor's." (The reader will excuse me if I do not reproduce his stuttering.)

"And who is Khor?"

"Why, a peasant of mine. . . . . He lives not far from here."

We wended our way thither. In the middle of the forest, in a cleared and cultivated glade, Khor's isolated farmstead was erected. It consisted of several edifices of pine logs, connected by fences; in front of the principal cottage stretched a penthouse, supported by slender posts. We entered. We were greeted by a young lad, twenty years of age, tall and handsome.

"Ah, Fédya! Is Khor at home?"—Mr. Polutýkin asked him.

"No. Khor has gone to town,"—replied the young fellow, displaying a row of snow-white teeth. "Is it your order that I harness up the little cart?"

"Yes, brother. And fetch us some kvas." [1]

[1] A sort of small beer, made by pouring water on the crusts of the sour, black, rye bread (or on rye meal) and fermenting it. I leave the friendly, simple "brother" in literal translation, here

We entered the cottage. Not a single Súzdal [1] picture was pasted upon the neat timber walls; in the corner, in front of a heavy, holy picture in a silver setting, burned a shrine-lamp; the linden-wood table had been recently planed off and washed; no lively cockroaches [2] were roaming between the planks and over the frames of the windows, neither were any meditative black beetles concealed there. The young man speedily made his appearance with a large white jug filled with good kvas, a huge hunk of wheaten bread, and a dozen salted cucumbers in a wooden bowl. He placed all these eatables on the table, leaned against the door, and began to gaze at us with a smile. Before we had had time to finish our refreshments, the cart rumbled up in front of the porch. We went out. A boy of fifteen, curly-haired and rosy-cheeked, was sitting in the driver's place, and with difficulty holding in a well-fed piebald stallion. Round about the cart stood six young giants, all of whom bore a strong resemblance both to each other and to Fédya. "All young Polecats!" [3] remarked Polutýkin. "All young Polecats,"—chimed in Fédya, who had followed us out to the porch:

as elsewhere, instead of using "my dear fellow," "my boy," "my lad," or the like.—TRANSLATOR.

[1] A kind of cheap lithograph made in the town named.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] "Prussians," literally.—TRANSLATOR.

[3] Khor', a polecat; Khor'ki, young polecats, or Khor's sons.—TRANSLATOR.

" and this is not all, either: Potáp is in the forest, and Sídor has gone to town with old Khor. . . . See here, Vásya," he went on, addressing the driver:—" go like the wind: thou art driving the master. Only, look out, and slow down at the jolting-places: otherwise thou wilt spoil the cart and disturb the master's belly!" The remaining young Khors grinned at Fédya's sallies.—" Help Astronomer in!" exclaimed Mr. Polutýkin, solemnly. Fédya, not without satisfaction, lifted the dog, which was smiling in a forced way, into the air, and deposited him on the bottom of the cart. Vásya gave the horse his head. We drove off. " That 's my counting-house yonder," said Mr. Polutýkin suddenly to me, pointing at a small, low house:—" would you like to go in? "—" With pleasure."—" It is abolished now," he remarked, as he alighted:—" but it 's worth inspection, all the same."—The office consisted of two empty rooms. The watchman, a crooked old man, ran in from the back yard.—" Good day, Minyáitch," said Mr. Polutýkin: " But where 's the water? "—The crooked old man vanished, and immediately returned with a bottle of water and two glasses. " Try it," said Polutýkin to me: " It 's good spring water." We drank a glass apiece, whereupon the old man made us a reverence to the girdle.—" Well, now, I think we can drive on," remarked my new friend. " In this office I sold to merchant Allelúieff four desya-

tínas[1] of forest, at a good price."—We seated ourselves in the cart, and half an hour later we drove into the yard of the manor-house.

"Tell me, please," I asked Polutýkin at supper:—"why does your Khor live apart from your other peasants?"

"This is why: he 's a clever peasant. Five and twenty years ago, his cottage burned down; so then he came to my late father, and said: 'Permit me, Nikolái Kúzmitch, to settle in your forest, on the marsh. I 'll pay you a good quit-rent there.'—'But why dost thou wish to settle on the marsh?'—'Well, because I do: only, dear little father, Nikolái Kúzmitch, be so good as not to use me for work any more, but impose whatever quit-rent you see fit.'—'Fifty rubles a year!'—'All right.'—'And look out, I won't tolerate any arrears!'—'Of course, there shall be no arrears.' . . . . . And so he settled on the marsh. Since that time, the people have nicknamed him The Polecat (Khor)."

"Well, and has he grown rich?"

"Yes. Now he pays me a hundred rubles quit-rent, and I 'm thinking of raising it again. More than once I have said to him: 'Buy thy freedom! Khor, take my advice, buy thy freedom!' . . . . But he, the beast, assures me that he can't afford to; he has n't any money, he says. . . . But, of course, he has!"

[1] A desyatína is 2.70 acres.—Translator.

On the following day, we went off hunting again as soon as we had drunk tea. As we were passing through the village, Mr. Polutýkin ordered the coachman to halt at a low-roofed cottage, and shouted loudly: "Kalínitch!"—"Immediately, master, I 'll be there immediately,"—rang out a voice from the yard:—"I 'm tying on my linden-bark slippers."—We drove at a foot-pace; outside of the village we were overtaken by a man of forty, tall of stature, gaunt, with a small head which was bent backward. This was Kalínitch. His good-natured, swarthy face, pitted here and there with pock-marks, pleased me at the first glance. Kalínitch (as I afterward learned) went hunting with his master every day, carried his game-bag, sometimes his gun also, spied out where the bird alighted, fetched water, picked strawberries, erected huts of shelter, ran behind the drozhky; Mr. Polutýkin could not take a step without him. Kalínitch was a man of the merriest, gentlest possible nature, was incessantly humming to himself, casting care-free glances in all directions, spoke somewhat through his nose, smilingly screwed up his bright-blue eyes, and frequently clasped his thin, wedge-shaped beard in his hand. He walked in a leisurely way, but with huge strides, leaning lightly on a long, slender staff. In the whole course of the day, he never addressed me once, served me without servility, but looked

after his master as he would after a child. When the intolerable sultriness of midday made us seek a shelter, he led us to his bee-farm, in the depths of the forest. Kalínitch threw open to us the tiny cottage, draped with trusses of dry, sweet-smelling grass, made us a bed on the fresh hay, and putting on his head a sort of sack with a net, took a knife, a pot, and a fire-brand, and betook himself to his beehives, to cut out some honey for us. We drank the warm, transparent honey like spring-water, and fell asleep to the monotonous humming of the bees and the chattering rustle of the leaves. A light gust of wind awakened me. . . . . I opened my eyes, and saw Kalínitch: he was sitting on the threshold of the half-open door, and carving a spoon with his knife. For a long time I admired his face, gentle and clear as the sky at eventide. Mr. Polutýkin also awoke. We did not rise at once. It is pleasant, after a long tramp and a deep sleep, to lie motionless on the hay: the body luxuriates and languishes, the face is flushed with a faint heat, sweet languor closes the eyelids. At last we rose, and went out to roam about until the evening. At supper I began to talk again about Khor and also about Kalínitch.—"Kalínitch is a good peasant,"—said Mr. Polutýkin to me:—"a zealous and obliging peasant; but he cannot keep his domestic affairs in order: I am always taking him away. Every day he goes hunting

with me. . . What sort of farm-management is possible under the circumstances—you can judge for yourself."—I agreed with him, and we went to bed.

On the following day, Mr. Polutýkin was obliged to go to town on business connected with his neighbour Pitchukóff. His neighbour Pitchukóff tilled some of his land, and on the land thus tilled had whipped one of his peasant women. I went hunting alone, and toward evening dropped in at Khor's. On the threshold of the cottage an old man received me,—a bald old man, low of stature, broad-shouldered, and thick-set—the Polecat himself. I gazed with curiosity at this Khor. The cut of his countenance reminded me of Socrates: there was the same lofty, knobby brow, the same small eyes, the same snub nose. We entered the cottage together. The same Fédya brought me milk and black bread. Khor seated himself on the bench, and stroking his curly beard with the utmost composure, entered into conversation with me. He felt his dignity, apparently, and moved and spoke slowly, occasionally smiling beneath his long moustache.

We chatted together about the seed-planting and the harvest, about the life of the peasants. . . . He seemed to agree thoroughly with me; only, afterward, I became ashamed, and felt that I had not been saying the right thing. . . . Somehow, it turned out so strangely. Khor sometimes

expressed himself queerly, out of wariness, it must have been. . . . Here is a sample of our conversation:

"See here, Khor," I said to him: "why dost not thou buy thy freedom from thy master?"

"And why should I buy my freedom? As it is, I know my master, and I know what quit-rent I have to pay. . . . we have a good master."

"But it is better to be free, nevertheless,"—I remarked.

Khor gazed askance at me.

"Of course," said he.

"Well, then, why dost not thou buy thyself free?"

Khor twisted his head around.

"Wherewith wouldst thou have me buy my freedom, dear little father?"

"Come now, enough of that, old man. . . . ."

"If Khor were to become a freeman," he went on in an undertone, as though speaking to himself:—"any one who lives without a beard would be Khor's superior."

"But shave off thy beard."

"What 's the beard? the beard is grass: it can be mown."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, you know, Khor will fall straightway among the merchants; the merchants lead a comfortable life, and they wear beards."

"What then, thou art engaged in trade also, art thou not?"—I asked him.

"We do a little trade in butter and tar. . . . . Dost thou command us to harness up the light cart, dear little father?"

"Thou keepest a tight rein on thy tongue, and art a man who knows his own mind," I thought. "No," I said aloud:—"I don't want the cart; I shall be roaming in the vicinity of thy farm to-morrow, and, with thy permission, I will stop and pass the night in thy hay-barn."

"Pray do. But wilt thou be comfortable in the barn? I will order the women to spread a sheet and place a pillow for thee. Hey there, women!"—he shouted, rising from his seat:—"hither, women! . . . . And do thou go with him, Fédya. For women are a stupid lot.

A quarter of an hour later, Fédya escorted me to the barn with a lantern. I threw myself down on the fragrant hay; my dog curled himself up at my feet; Fédya bade me good night, the door squeaked and slammed. It was a good while before I could get to sleep. A cow came to the door, and breathed hard a couple of times; my dog growled at her with dignity; a pig passed by, grunting meditatively; a horse somewhere near at hand began to chew hay and snort . . . . at last I fell asleep.

At dawn Fédya waked me. That merry, dashing young fellow pleased me greatly; and, so

far as I had been able to observe, he was a favourite with old Khor also. The two bantered each other very amiably. The old man came out to meet me. Whether it was because I had passed the night under his roof, or for some other reason, at all events, Khor treated me much more graciously than on the preceding evening.

"The samovár is ready for thee,"—he said to me, with a smile:—"let us go and drink tea."

We seated ourselves around the table. A robust peasant woman, one of his daughters-in-law, brought a pot of milk. All his sons entered the cottage in turn. "What a tall family thou hast!"—I remarked to the old man.

"Yes," he said, biting off a tiny morsel of sugar:—"they have, apparently, no complaints to make against me or against my old woman."

"And do they all live with thee?"

"Yes. They want to, themselves, so here they live."

"And are all of them married?"

"That one yonder, the scamp, won't marry,"—he replied, pointing at Fédya, who, as before, was leaning against the door.—"Váska is too young, he must wait a while."

"But why should I marry?" retorted Fédya: "I 'm comfortable as I am. What do I want with a wife? For the sake of snarling at each other, pray?"

"Oh, get out! . . . I know thee! thou wearest a silver ring.[1] . . . . . Thou wouldst like to be sniffing around the women among the house-serfs. . . . 'Stop that, you impudent thing!'" went on the old man, imitating the house-maids. "I know thee thoroughly, thou lazy creature!"

"And what is there good about a woman?"

"A woman is a worker,"—remarked Khor, impressively. "A woman is a man's servant."

"But what do I want with a worker?"

"That 's exactly the point, thou art fond of picking up the hot coals by making a catspaw of other people. We know all about fellows of your stamp."

"Well, marry me off, then, if that 's the case. Hey? What dost thou say to that? Why art thou silent?"

"Come, that will do, that will do, jester. Dost thou not see that we are bothering the gentleman. I 'll marry thee off, never fear. . . And be not angry, dear little father: the child is little as yet, seest thou, and has n't succeeded in acquiring sense."

Fédya shook his head. . . . . .

"Is Khor at home?"—resounded a familiar voice outside the door,—and Kalínitch entered the cottage with a bunch of wild strawberries in his hand, which he had plucked for his friend

[1] That is, he was getting foppish and so showing an interest.—TRANSLATOR.

Khor. The old man gave him a cordial greeting. I stared in amazement at Kalínitch: I must confess, that I had not expected such "sentimentality" from a peasant.

On that day, I set out on my hunt four hours later than usual, and spent the three following days with Khor. My new acquaintances interested me. I do not know how I won their confidence, but they talked unreservedly with me. I listened to them and watched them with pleasure. The two friends did not resemble each other in the least. Khor was a decisive, practical man with an administrative head, a rationalist; Kalínitch, on the contrary, belonged to the class of idealists, romanticists, exalted and dreamy people. Khor understood reality, that is to say: he had established himself comfortably, he had amassed a little money, he got along well with his master, and with the other authorities; Kalínitch wore linden-bark slippers, and worried along as best he might. Khor had bred a large family, obedient and harmonious; Kalínitch had had a wife, once upon a time, of whom he had been afraid, and had never had any children at all. Khor saw through Mr. Polutýkin; Kalínitch worshipped his master. Khor loved Kalínitch, and afforded him his protection; Kalínitch loved and respected Khor. Khor talked little, laughed and reasoned to himself; Kalínitch expressed himself with fervour, although he could

not gabble as fluently[1] as a dashing factory hand. . . . But Kalínitch was endowed with prerogatives which Khor himself recognised; for example: he could conjure blood,[2] fear, madness, and expel worms; he was successful with bees, he had a light hand. Khor, in my presence, requested him to lead a newly bought horse into the stable, and Kalínitch, with conscientious pompousness,[3] complied with the old sceptic's request. Kalínitch stood closer to nature; but Khor to people, to society; Kalínitch did not like to reason, and believed everything blindly; Khor rose even to the ironical point of view on life. He had seen a great deal, he knew a great deal, and I learned much from him. For instance: from his narratives I learned that every summer, before the mowing, a small peasant cart of a peculiar aspect makes its appearances in the villages. In this cart sits a man in a kaftan, and sells scythes. For cash, he charges a ruble and twenty-five kopéks in coin, or a ruble and fifty kopéks in bank-bills; on credit, he asks three paper rubles and a silver ruble. All the peasants buy on credit, of course. Two or three weeks later, he makes his appearance again, and demands his money. The peasant's oats are just reaped, so he has the wherewithal to pay, he goes with the merchant to the dram-shop, and there he discharges

[1] Russian: "Sing like a nightingale."—TRANSLATOR.
[2] Stop the flow, as in nosebleed.—TRANSLATOR.
[3] Because he had "the lucky hand."—TRANSLATOR.

his debt. Some landed proprietors conceived the idea of buying the scythes themselves, for cash, and distributing them, on credit, to the peasants, at the same price; but the peasants proved to be dissatisfied, and even fell into a state of dejection; they had been deprived of the satisfaction of tapping the scythe and listening to the ring of it, of turning it about in their hands, and asking the crafty merchant from the petty burgher class, twenty times in succession: "See here, young fellow, that is n't such a very good scythe, is it?"—The same tricks take place also over the purchase of reaping-hooks, with merely this difference, that in this case the women take a hand in the matter, and sometimes force the pedlar to thrash them, for their own benefit. But the women are the greatest sufferers in any case. The men who contract to supply material for the paper-mills entrust the purchase of rags of a special sort to men who, in some districts, are called "eagles." An "eagle" of this sort receives from the merchant a couple of hundred rubles in bank-bills, and sets forth in quest of booty. But, in contrast to the noble bird from whom he has received his name, he does not swoop down openly and boldly,—quite the reverse: the "eagle" resorts to craft and wiles. He leaves his little cart somewhere or other in the bushes near the village, and sets forth along the back yards and back doors, just as though he

were some passing stranger, or simply a roving vagrant. The women divine his approach by instinct, and steal forth to meet him. The trading compact is completed in haste. For a few copper farthings the peasant woman delivers to the "eagle" not only every useless rag, but frequently her husband's shirt and her own gown. Of late, the women have found it profitable to steal from themselves, and rid themselves in this manner of the hemp, especially of hemp-yarn,—an important extension and improvement of the "eagles'" industry! On the other hand, the peasant men have grown alert, and at the slightest suspicion, at the mere distant rumour, of the appearance of an "eagle," they proceed swiftly and vivaciously to corrective and precautionary measures. And, as a matter of fact, is it not an outrage? Selling the hemp is their business,—and they really do sell it—not in town,—they would have to trudge to the town,—but to travelling dealers, who, for the lack of scales, reckon forty handfuls as a pud,[1]—and you know what sort of a fist and what sort of a palm the Russian man possesses, especially when he "waxes zealous"! Of such tales I, an inexperienced man, and a "resident" in the country (as we say in our government of Orel), heard aplenty. But Khor did not tell stories all the time; he questioned me about many things.

[1] A trifle over thirty-six pounds, English.—Translator.

He learned that I had been abroad, and his curiosity was inflamed. . . . Kalínitch kept pace with him; but Kalínitch was more affected by descriptions of nature, of mountains, waterfalls, remarkable buildings, great towns; administrative and governmental questions interested Khor. He inquired into everything in turn:—"Do they have everything yonder just as we have, or is it different? . . Come, tell me, dear little father, how is it? . . . . "Ah! Akh! O Lord, Thy will be done!"—Kalínitch would exclaim in the course of my narrative; Khor maintained silence, contracted his thick eyebrows in a frown, and merely remarked, from time to time, "That would n't suit us, but it 's good—it 's right."—I cannot transmit to you all his queries, and there is no reason that I should; but I carried away from our conversations one conviction, which, in all probability, will be utterly unexpected to my readers,—the conviction that Peter the Great was pre-eminently a Russian man—Russian, to wit, in his reforms. The Russian man is so convinced of his strength and vigour that he is not averse to making a violent effort: he takes little interest in his past, and looks boldly ahead. What is good pleases him, what is sensible he wants to have given to him, and whence it comes is a matter of perfect indifference to him. His healthy mind is fond of jeering at the lean German brain; but the Germans, in Khor's words,

are an interesting little race, and he was ready to learn of them. Thanks to the exclusive nature of his situation, of his practical independence, Khor talked to me about many things which you could n't pry out of any other man with a crowbar,—as the peasants say, grind out with a millstone. He really understood his position. In chatting with Khor, I heard, for the first time, the simple, clever speech of the Russian peasant. His knowledge was tolerably extensive, of its kind, but he did not know how to read; Kalínitch did. "Reading and writing came easy to that blockhead," remarked Khor:—"and his bees have never died when they swarmed."—"But thou hast had thy children taught to read and write?"—Khor remained silent for a while.—"Fédya knows how."—"And the others?"—"The others don't."—"Why not?"—The old man made no reply, and changed the conversation. Moreover, sensible as he was, he had a great many prejudices and bigoted ideas. For example, he despised women from the bottom of his soul, and when he was in merry mood he jeered at and ridiculed them. His wife, aged and waspish, never descended from the oven all day long, and grumbled and scolded incessantly; her sons paid no attention to her, but she kept her daughters-in-law in the fear of God,—under her thumb. Not without reason does the husband's mother sing in Russian ballads: "What

sort of a son art thou to me, what sort of a family man! thou beatest not thy wife, thou beatest not the young woman. . . . . " I once took it into my head to stand up for the daughters-in-law, I tried to arouse Khor's compassion; but he calmly replied to me, " Why do you bother yourself with such . . . . . trifles,—let the women wrangle; . . . . if they are interfered with 't will be all the worse, and it is n't worth while to soil one's hands." Sometimes the ill-tempered old woman crawled down from the oven, called the watch-dog in from the anteroom, saying: " Come here, come here, doggy! " and beat it on its gaunt back with the oven-fork, or took up her stand under the penthouse and " yowled," as Khor expressed it, at all the passers-by. But she feared her husband, and, at his command, she took herself off to her place on the oven. But the most curious thing of all was to listen to a dispute between Khor and Kalínitch, when Mr. Polutýkin was in question.—" Don't touch him, Khor,"—said Kalínitch.—" But why does n't he have some boots made for thee? " retorted the other.—" Eka, boots! . . . . what do I want of boots? I 'm a serf." . . . . " Well, and here am I a serf too, but see here—" . . . . At this word, Khor elevated his leg, and showed Kalínitch his boot, carved, probably, out of mammoth hide.—" Ekh, but art thou one of us? " replied Kalínitch.—" Well, he might, at least, give thee some

bark slippers: for thou goest a-hunting with him; thou must wear out a pair a day, I should think." —"He does give me money for slippers."—"Yes, and last year he presented thee with a ten-kopék piece."—Kalínitch turned away in vexation, but Khor burst out laughing, whereat his little eyes completely disappeared.

Kalínitch sang quite agreeably, and played on the *balaláika*.[1] Khor would listen and listen to him, then suddenly loll his head on one side, and begin to chime in, in a mournful voice. He was especially fond of the song: "Oh, thou my Fate, my Fate!" Fédya omitted no opportunity to banter his father. "What has moved thee to pity, old man?" But Khor propped his cheek on his hand, shut his eyes, and continued to bewail his fate. . . . . On the other hand, there was no more active man than he at any other time; he was eternally busy about something or other —mending a cart, propping up the fence, looking over the harness. He did not, however, affect any special degree of cleanliness, and in reply to my comments he once said that "the cottage must smell as though it were inhabited."

"But just see,"—I retorted:—"how clean everything is at Kalínitch's bee-farm."

"The bees would n't live otherwise,"—he said with a sigh.

"And hast thou a hereditary estate of thine

[1] A triangular, three-stringed guitar.—TRANSLATOR.

own?"—he asked me on another occasion.—"Yes."—"Is it far from here?"—"About a hundred versts."—"And dost thou live on thy estate, dear little father?"—"Yes, I do."—"And thou amusest thyself chiefly with thy gun, I suppose?"—"I must confess that I do."—"And a good thing it is, too, dear little father; shoot as many black-cock as thou wilt, and change thy steward as often as possible."

On the fourth day, at evening, Mr. Polutýkin sent for me. I was sorry to part from the old man. In company with Kalínitch, I seated myself in the cart. "Well, good-bye, Khor; may health be thine!" I said. . . . . "Good-bye, Fédya."—"Good-bye, dear little father, good-bye; don't forget us." We drove off; the sunset had just begun to blaze out.—"The weather will be splendid to-morrow," I said, glancing at the clear sky.—"No, there will be rain,"—Kalínitch replied:—"the ducks yonder are splashing, and the grass smells awfully strong."—We drove among the bushes. Kalínitch began to sing in a low tone, as he bounced about on the driver's seat, and kept staring, staring at the sunset glow. . . . .

On the following day, I quitted Mr. Polutýkin's hospitable roof.

II

ERMOLÁI AND THE MILLER'S WIFE

In the evening, Ermolái and I set off to the "stand-shooting." . . . . But, possibly, not all my readers know what that is. Listen then, gentlemen.

A quarter of an hour before sunset, in spring, you enter the woods with your gun, and without your dog. You search out for yourself a spot somewhere close to the border of the woods, scan your surroundings, look to your percussion-cap, exchange winks with your companion. A quarter of an hour has elapsed. The sun has set, but it is still light in the forest; the air is pure and limpid; the birds are chirping volubly; the young grass gleams with the gay shimmer of an emerald . . . you wait. The interior of the forest gradually grows dark; the scarlet light of the evening sky glides slowly along the roots and boles of the trees, rises ever higher and higher, passes from the lower, almost bare boughs, to the motionless crests of the trees, which are falling asleep. . . . And lo, now the crests also have grown dim; the crimson heaven turns blue. The odour of the forest is intensified, a warm moisture

is lightly wafted abroad; the fleeting breeze dies away around you. The birds sink to sleep—not all at once—but according to their species: now the chaffinches have fallen silent, in a few moments the hedge-sparrows will do the same, and after them the greenfinches. In the forest, everything grows darker and darker. The trees flow together in huge, blackish masses; the first tiny stars peer out timidly in the blue sky. All the birds are asleep. The redtails, the little woodpeckers, alone are still chirping sleepily. . . . And now they, also, have grown silent. Once more the resonant voice of the pewit has rung out overhead; an oriole has uttered a mournful cry somewhere or other; the nightingale has trilled for the first time. Your heart is languishing with anticipation, and all of a sudden—but only sportsmen will understand me—all of a sudden, athwart the profound silence, a peculiar sort of croaking and hissing rings out, the measured sweep of rapid wings becomes audible,—and a woodcock, his long beak handsomely bent on one side, flies swimmingly from behind a dark birch-tree to meet your shot.

That is what " stand-shooting " means.

So, as I was saying, Ermolái and I set out for the stand-shooting; but pardon me, gentlemen; I must first make you acquainted with Ermolái.

Picture to yourselves a man five and forty years of age, tall, gaunt, with a long, thin nose,

a narrow forehead, small grey eyes, dishevelled hair, and broad, mocking lips. This man went about, winter and summer, in a yellowish nankeen kaftan, of German cut, but girt with a belt; he wore blue, full trousers, and a cap with a lamb-skin border, presented to him by a ruined landed proprietor in a merry mood. To his girdle were attached two bags, one in front, artfully twisted into two halves, for powder and shot,—the other behind, for game; but the wads Ermolái procured from his own, seemingly inexhaustible, cap. He might easily have bought himself a cartridge-box and a game-bag out of the money paid to him for the game he sold, but he never once even so much as thought of such a purchase, and continued to load his gun as before, exciting the amazement of spectators by the art wherewith he avoided the danger of spilling or mixing the powder and shot. His gun was single-barrelled, with a flint lock, addicted, moreover, to the bad habit of "kicking" viciously, the result of which was, that Ermolái's right cheek was always plumper than the left. How he could hit anything with that gun was more than even a clever man could divine; but hit he did. He had a setter dog, Valétka,[1] a very remarkable creature. Ermolái never fed him. "As if I were going to feed a dog,"—he argued: —"moreover, a dog is a clever animal, it will

[1] Little knave or valet; also, knave at cards.—TRANSLATOR.

find food for itself." And, in fact, although Valétka astonished even the indifferent passer-by with his emaciation, still he lived, and lived long; and even, in spite of his wretched condition, he never once got lost, nor exhibited a desire to abandon his master. Once upon a time, during his youthful years, he absented himself for a couple of days, led astray by love; but that folly speedily broke away from him. Valétka's most remarkable quality was his incomprehensible indifference to everything on earth. . . . . If I were not speaking of a dog, I would use the word disenchantment. He generally sat with his bob-tail tucked up under him, scowled, shivered, now and then, and never smiled. (Everyone knows that dogs have the power of smiling, and even of smiling very prettily.) He was extremely ill-favoured, and not a single idle house-serf omitted an opportunity to jeer spitefully at his appearance; but Valétka endured all these jeers and even blows with remarkable coolness. He afforded particular satisfaction to the cooks, who immediately tore themselves from their work, and set out in pursuit of him with hue and cry, when he, in consequence of a weakness not confined to dogs alone, thrust his hungry snout through the half-open door of the seductively warm and sweet-smelling kitchen. On a hunt, he distinguished himself by indefatigability, and he had a very respectable scent; but if

he accidentally overtook a wounded hare, he promptly devoured every bit of him, to the very last little bone, with great gusto, somewhere in the cool shade, at a respectful distance from Ermolái, who swore in all known and unknown dialects.

Ermolái belonged to one of my neighbours, a country squire of the ancient sort. These old-fashioned landed proprietors do not like "snipe," and stick to domestic fowls. It is only on exceptional occasions—on birth-days, saints' days, and election days [1]—that the cooks of squires of the ancient cut undertake to prepare the long-billed birds, and, waxing furious, as a Russian is wont to do when he himself does not quite understand what he is about, they invent for them such complicated sauces, that most of the guests survey with curiosity and attention the viands placed before them, but cannot possibly bring themselves to taste them. Ermolái had orders to furnish his master's table, once a month, with a couple of brace of black-cock and partridges, and, for the rest, was permitted to live where and how he pleased. He was discarded, as a man who was fit for no work whatsoever,—"a ne'er do well," as we say in the Government of Orel. They did not furnish him with powder and shot, as a matter of course, in consonance with the self-same principle on which he did not feed his dog.

[1] For Marshal of the Nobility.—TRANSLATOR.

Ermolái was a man of a very singular nature; care-free as a bird, decidedly loquacious, absent-minded, and clumsy in appearance; he was extremely fond of drink, never lived long in one place, shuffled his feet as he walked, and swayed from side to side,—and with all his shuffling and swaying to and fro, he would cover a distance of fifty versts in twenty-four hours. He exposed himself to the most varied experiences; he would pass the night in the marshes, in trees, on roofs, under bridges, more than once he sat locked up in garrets, cellars, and barns, lost his gun, his dog, his most indispensable garments, was thrashed long and violently,—and, notwithstanding, after a while, he would return home clothed, with his gun and his dog. It was impossible to call him a jolly man, although he was almost always in a fairly cheerful mood; his general aspect was that of a droll fellow. Ermolái was fond of chatting with a nice man, especially over a glass of liquor, but even that not for long at a time; he would rise and walk off.—"But where the devil art thou going? Night is falling."—"Why, to Tcháplino."—"But what hast thou got to trudge to Tcháplino for—ten versts away?"—"Why, to spend the night there with peasant Sofrón."—"Come, spend the night here."—"No, I can't."—And off would go Ermolái, with his Valétka, into the dark night, through the bushes and the ravines, and, as likely as not, the poor peasant

Sofrón would not let him into the house, and, in all probability, would pummel his back for him to boot: "Don't go bothering honest folks." On the other hand, there was no one who could be compared with Ermolái in the art of catching fish at flood-water in spring, of getting crawfish with his hands, of searching out game by instinct, of decoying woodcock, of training hawks, of enticing nightingales with the "forest pipes," with "cuckoo call." [1] . . . . One thing he could not do: train dogs; he had not the patience. He had a wife. He went to see her once a week. She dwelt in a miserable, half-ruined little hut, scraped along somehow or other, and often did not know at night whether she would have enough to eat on the morrow or not, and, in general, her lot was a bitter one. Ermolái, that carefree, good-natured man, treated her harshly and roughly, assuming at home a threatening and surly aspect,—and his poor wife did not know how to please him, trembled at his glance, bought him liquor with her last farthing, and servilely covered him with her sheepskin coat when he, stretching himself out majestically on the oven, fell into a heroic slumber. More than once I had occasion to observe in him the involuntary manifestations of a certain surly ferocity. I did not like the expression of his face when

[1] Hunters for nightingales are familiar with these terms: they designate the best "passages" in the nightingale's song.—AUTHOR.

he bit the neck of a wounded bird. But Ermoláï never remained at home for more than one day; and, away from home, he was again transformed into "Ermólka," as he was called for a hundred versts round about, and as he occasionally called himself.[1] The meanest house-serf was conscious of his superiority over this vagabond,—and, possibly for that very reason, treated him in a friendly manner; while the peasants first gladly pursued and caught him, like a hare in the field, but afterward released him and bade him God-speed, and having once recognised the fact that he was a queer fish, they did not touch him again, but even gave him bread, and entered into conversation with him. . . . . This was the man whom I took with me as a hunter, and with him I set out for "stand-shooting" in a large birch grove on the bank of the Ísta.

Many Russian rivers have one hilly shore and the other in level plains, like the Volga; so has the Ísta. This little river winds about in an extremely capricious way, writhing like a snake, never flows straight for a single half-verst, and, in some places, from the crest of a steep hill, about ten versts of it are visible, with dams and ponds, mills, vegetable-plots enclosed with willows, and dense gardens. The Ísta abounds in fish, especially in mullet (the peasants catch

[1] The diminutive form conveys the idea of an amiable, good fellow. Ermólka may also mean the skull-cap.—TRANSLATOR.

them, with their hands, in the heat of the day, under the bushes). Small sandpipers fly whistling along the rocky shores, dotted with cold, bright springs; wild ducks swim out into the centre of the ponds, and gaze cautiously about; herons stand out prominently in the shadow, in the bays, under the precipices. . . . . We had been standing at " stand-shooting " for about an hour, and had killed a couple of brace of woodcock; and, being desirous of trying our luck once more before sunrise (one can also go stand-shooting early in the morning), we decided to pass the night in the nearest mill. We emerged from the grove, and descended the hill. The river was flowing on in dark-blue waves; the air had grown thick, burdened with the nocturnal moisture. We knocked at the gate. The dogs began to bark in the yard. " Who 's there? "—rang out a hoarse, sleepy voice.—" Sportsmen: let us in to pass the night."—There was no answer.—" We will pay."—" I 'll go and tell the master. . . Shut up, you damned beasts! . . . . Ekh, I 'd like to murder you! "—We heard the labourer enter the cottage; he speedily returned to the gate.—" No," he said, " the master does not command me to admit you."—" Why not? "—" Why, he 's afraid: you are hunters; the first thing anybody knows, you 'll be setting the mill afire; you see, you have that sort of ammunition."—" What nonsense! "—" Anyhow, our mill was

burned down the year before last: some cattle-drovers spent the night here, and, you know, probably they set it ablaze."—" But, brother, we can't spend the night out of doors, of course! "—" As you please." . . . . He went off, clumping with his boots.

Ermolái wished him divers unpleasant things. " Let 's go to the village,"—he ejaculated, at last, with a sigh. But it was two versts to the village. . . . " Let 's pass the night here,"—said I:—" it is warm out of doors; the miller will send us out some straw, if we pay for it." —Ermolái agreed, without making any difficulties.—Again we began to thump on the gate.—" What do you want now? "—rang out the voice of the hired man again:—" I told you, you could n't."—We explained to him what we wanted. He went to consult his master, and came back accompanied by the latter. The wicket screeched. The miller made his appearance, a man of lofty stature, with a fat face, a bull neck, and a huge, round belly. He assented to my proposal. A hundred paces from the mill there was a tiny shed, open on all sides. Thither they brought us straw and hay; the workman placed the samovár on the grass beside the stream, and squatting down on his heels, began zealously to blow into the pipe. . . . . The coals flared up brilliantly, illuminating his youthful face. The miller ran to arouse his wife, and, at

last, himself suggested to me that we should spend the night in his cottage; but I preferred to remain in the open air. The miller's wife brought us milk, eggs, potatoes, and bread. The samovár soon began to hiss, and we set to drinking tea. Vapours rose from the river; there was no wind; the corncrakes were calling all around us; faint noises resounded near the mill-wheels: now the drops dripped from the blades, again the water trickled through the bars of the sluice-gate. We built a small bonfire. While Ermolái was roasting the potatoes in the ashes, I managed to fall into a doze. . . . . A faint, repressed whispering aroused me. I raised my head: before the fire, on an overturned cask, sat the miller's wife, chatting with my huntsman. I had already, from her garb, her movements, and her mode of speech, divined that she was of the house-serf class—not a peasant woman, and not a petty burgheress; but only now did I scan her face well. Apparently, she was about thirty years of age; her thin, pale face still preserved traces of remarkable beauty; I was particularly pleased by her eyes, which were large and mournful. She had her elbows propped on her knees, and her face rested on her hands. Ermolái was sitting with his back toward me, and feeding the fire with chips.

"There 's murrain in Zheltúkhino again,"—said the miller's wife:—"both of Father Iván's

cows are down with it. . . . . Lord have mercy!"

"And how are your pigs?"—inquired Ermolái, after a pause.

"They 're alive."

"You might, at least, give me a sucking-pig."

The miller's wife remained silent for a while, then sighed.

"Who 's this you 're with?"—she asked.

"With a gentleman—the gentleman from Kostomárovsk."

Ermolái flung several fir-branches on the fire; the branches immediately began to crackle vigorously, the thick, white smoke puffed out straight in his face.

"Why would n't your husband let us into the cottage?"

"He 's afraid."

"What a fat-belly! . . . . My dear little dove, Arína Timofyéevna, do thou fetch me out a little glass of liquor!"

The miller's wife rose, and disappeared into the gloom. Ermolái began to sing in an undertone:

"When to my loved one I did go,
All my boots I quite wore out."

Arína returned with a small caraffe and a glass. Ermolái half rose to his feet, crossed him-

self, and tossed off a glassful at a gulp. "I love it!" he added.

Again the miller's wife seated herself on the cask.

"Well, how goes it, Arína Timofyéevna,—thou art still ailing, I suppose?"

"Yes, I am."

"What 's the matter?"

"My cough torments me at night."

"The gentleman has fallen asleep, apparently,"—said Ermolái, after a brief silence.—"Don't go to the doctor, Arína: 't will be the worse for thee."

"I 'm not going, as it is."

"But do thou come and stay with me."

Arína bowed her head.

"I 'll drive my own wife away, in that case,"—went on Ermolái. . . "I really will, ma'am."

"You 'd better wake up your master, Ermolái Petróvitch; the potatoes are roasted enough, you see."

"Why, let him go on with his nap,"—remarked my faithful servant, indifferently,—"he has run his legs off, so he is sleepy."

I turned over on the hay. Ermolái rose, and came over to me.—"The potatoes are ready, sir, please eat."

I emerged from beneath the shed-roof; the miller's wife rose from the cask, and started to go away. I entered into conversation with her.

"Is it long since you took over this mill?"

"Our second year began on Trinity-day."[1]

"Where does thy husband come from?"

Arína did not understand my question.

"Whence comes thy husband?"[2]—repeated Ermolái, raising his voice.

"From Byelyóff. He is a burgher of Byelyóff."

"And art thou also from Byelyóff?"

"No, I 'm a serf. . . . I was a serf."

"Whose?"

"Mr. Zvyérkoff's. Now I 'm a free woman."

"Of what Zvyérkoff?"

"Alexander Sílitch."

"Wert not thou his wife's maid?"

"And how do you know that?—Yes, I was."

I gazed at Arína with redoubled curiosity and sympathy.

"I know thy master,"—I went on.

"Do you?"—she replied, in a low voice,—and dropped her eyes.

I must tell the reader why I gazed upon Arína with so much sympathy. During my sojourn in Petersburg, I had accidentally made the acquaintance of Mr. Zvyérkoff.[3] He occupied a

[1] In the Eastern Church this is Whitsunday, or Pentecost. The following day, which is an equally great feast, is "the Day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit." But the grand Pentecost celebration is on Trinity-day.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The gentleman says, correctly, "otkúda" (whence); Ermolái says, incorrectly, "otkéleva."—TRANSLATOR.

[3] Zvyérkoff is derived from *Zvyer*, a wild beast.—TRANSLATOR.

rather important post, and bore the reputation of being a clever and active man. He had a wife, plump, sensitive, tearful, and ill-tempered, a heavy, commonplace creature; he had also a son, a regular little squire's son of the old-fashioned type, spoiled and stupid. Mr. Zvyérkoff's personal appearance did not predispose one much in his favour: tiny, mouse-like eyes gazed craftily out of a broad, almost square face, a large, sharp-pointed nose, with flaring nostrils, projected from it; closely-clipped grey hair reared itself in a brush above a furrowed brow, thin lips twitched and smiled incessantly. Mr. Zvyérkoff generally stood with his legs straddled far apart, and his thick little hands thrust into his pockets. It once fell to my lot to drive out of town in the same carriage with him. We fell into conversation. Being an experienced, energetic man, Mr. Zvyérkoff began to instruct me in the "way of truth."

"Permit me to remark to you,"—he squeaked, at last:—"all you young men reason and talk about everything at random: you know very little about your own fatherland; Russia is an unknown country to you, gentlemen,—that 's what it is! . . . . You never read anything but German books. Here, for example, you are telling me this, that, and the other, about . . . well, that is to say, about house-serfs. . . . Very good, I don't deny it, that 's all very good; but you don't

know them, you don't know what sort of folks they are." Mr. Zvyérkoff blew his nose loudly, and took a pinch of snuff. "Allow me to relate to you, as an example, one little anecdote: you may find it interesting." (Mr. Zvyérkoff cleared his throat). "You know, I suppose, what sort of a wife I have: apparently, it would be difficult to find a kinder woman than she, you must agree to that. Her maids never have any hardships—their life is simply paradise visibly realised. . . . . But my wife has laid it down as a rule for herself: not to keep married maids. Really, it 's not the thing to do: children will arrive,—and this, and that,—well, and how is a maid to look after her mistress then, as she should, and attend to her ways: she no longer cares for that, she 's no longer thinking of that. One must reason humanely. So, sir, we were once driving through our village, it must be—I want to tell you accurately, not to lie—fifteen years ago. We saw that the Elder had a little girl, a daughter, a very pretty creature; there was even, you know, something obsequious about her manners. My wife says to me: 'Kokò,'—that is to say, you understand, that 's what she calls me,—'let 's take this young girl to Petersburg; she pleases me, Kokò.' . . . 'We 'll take her, with pleasure,' says I. The Elder, of course, fell at our feet; he could not have expected such luck, you understand. . . . . Well, of course,

the girl wept, out of folly. Now, it really is rather painful, at first: the parental house . . . . in general . . . . it 's not in the least surprising. But she soon got used to us; at first we put her in the maids' room; they taught her, of course. And what do you think? . . . . The girl made astonishing progress; my wife simply took a violent fancy to her, and at last appointed her as her personal maid, over the head of the other maids . . . . . observe! . . . And I must do her the justice to say, that my wife had never before had such a maid,—positively, never; obliging, modest, obedient—simply, everything that is required. On the other hand, I must admit that my wife petted her too much: she dressed her capitally, fed her from our own table,[1] gave her tea to drink . . . . well, and every sort of thing you can imagine! So, after this fashion, she served my wife for ten years. All of a sudden, one fine morning, just fancy, Arína comes in—her name was Arína—comes into my study, without being announced,—and, flop! she goes at my feet. . . . I will tell you frankly, that I cannot endure that sort of thing. A man should never forget his dignity, is n't that so? "—' What dost thou want? '—' Dear little father, Alexander Sílitch, I crave a favour.'—' What is it? '—' Permit me to marry.'—I must confess to you

[1] Russian servants always used to have, and generally have still, their own cook and special food, such as cabbage soup, buckwheat groats, and sour, black rye bread.—Translator.

that I was amazed.—'But dost not thou know, fool, that thy mistress has no other maid?'—'I will serve the mistress as usual.'—'Nonsense! Nonsense! thy mistress does not keep married maids.'—'Malánya can take my place.'—'I beg that thou wilt not argue!'—'As you will.'..... I must admit, that I was dumfounded. I tell you this is the sort of man I am: nothing so offends me, I venture to assert, so violently offends me, as ingratitude. . . . . For there is no need of my telling you—you know what sort of a wife I have: an angel in the flesh, kindness inexpressible. . . . . It seems as though even a malefactor would have pity on her. I ordered Arína out of the room. Perhaps she 'll recover her senses, I thought; one does n't wish, you know, to believe evil, black ingratitude in a person. But what do you think? Six months later, she is good enough to apply to me again, with the same request. Then I drove her away in wrath, I admit it, and threatened her, promised to tell my wife. I was upset. . . . . But conceive my surprise: a little while later, my wife comes to me, in tears, so agitated that I was fairly frightened.—'What has happened?'—'Arína . . . . . You understand. . . . I am ashamed to speak out.'—'It cannot be! . . . . who is it?'—'Petrúshka, the footman.' I flew into a rage. That 's the kind of man I am . . . . don't like half-measures! . . . . . Petrúshka . . . . is not to

blame. We can punish him; but, in my opinion, he is not to blame. Arína . . . . well, what is there . . . . well, well, what more is there to be said?' Of course, I immediately gave orders to have her hair cut off short, to clothe her in striped ticking, and to exile her to the country. My wife was deprived of an excellent maid, but there was no help for it: one cannot tolerate disorder in the household. It is better to amputate an ailing member at one blow. . . . . Well, well, and now, judge for yourself,—well, now, you know what my wife is, you see, you see, she 's, she 's, she 's . . . . an angel, in short! . . . . She had got attached to Arína, you see,—and Arína knew it, and was not ashamed. . . . . Hey? No, tell me . . . hey? But what 's the use of discussing it! In any case, there was nothing else to be done. And that girl's ingratitude pained me, me myself, for a long time. Say what you will . . . . . you need not look for heart, for feeling in those creatures! You may feed a wolf as you will, he always has his eye on the forest. . . . . Forward march, science! But I merely wished to prove to you . . . . ."

And, without finishing his sentence, Mr. Zvyérkoff turned away his head, and wrapped himself more closely in his cloak, manfully stifling his involuntary emotion.

The reader now understands, probably, why I gazed at Arína with sympathy.

"Hast thou been married long to the miller?" —I asked her, at last.

"Two years."

"But is it possible that thy master permitted it?"

"My freedom was purchased."

"By whom?"

"Savély Alexyéevitch."

"Who is he?"

"My husband." (Ermolái smiled to himself.) "But did my master talk to you about me?"—added Arína, after a brief silence.

I did not know what reply to make to her question. "Arína!" shouted the miller from afar. She rose and went away.

"Is her husband a good man?"—I asked Ermolái.

"So-so."

"And have they any children?"

"They had one, but it died."

"How did it come about—did the miller take a liking to her? Did he pay a large ransom for her?"

"I don't know. She knows how to read and write; in his business it . . . . . that sort of thing . . . . is an advantage. Consequently, he must have taken a fancy to her."

"And hast thou known her long?"

"Yes. I used to go to her master's formerly. Their manor is not far from here."

"And dost thou know Petrúshka the footman?"

"Piótr Vasílievitch? Of course I know him."

"Where is he now?"

"He has become a soldier."

We fell silent.

"She appears to be ill?"—I asked Ermolái, at last.

"Ill? I should say so! . . . . I think the stand-shooting will be good to-morrow. It would n't be a bad thing for you to get some sleep now."

A flock of wild ducks dashed whistling over our heads, and we heard them drop down on the river, not far from us. It was completely dark now, and beginning to grow cold; a nightingale was trilling loudly in the grove. We buried ourselves in the hay, and went to sleep.

III

THE RASPBERRY WATER

The heat often becomes unbearable at the beginning of August. At that time, between twelve and three o'clock, the most resolute and concentrated man is in no condition to go hunting, and the most devoted dog begins "to clean the sportsman's spurs," that is to say, trots behind him at a foot-pace, with his eyes painfully screwed up, and his tongue lolling out in an exaggerated manner; and, in reply to his master's reproaches, he meekly wags his tail, and expresses confusion on his countenance, but does not advance. Precisely on such a day I chanced to be out on a hunt. For a long time, I resisted the temptation to lie down somewhere in the shade, if only for a moment; for a long time, my indefatigable dog continued to rummage among the bushes, although, evidently, he did not expect any rational result from his feverish activity. At last, the stifling sultriness compelled me to think of saving my last strength and faculties. I managed to drag myself to the little river Ísta, already familiar to my indulgent readers, lowered myself from a crag, and strolled along the damp,

yellow sand in the direction of a spring known throughout the whole neighbourhood as "The Raspberry Water." This spring wells forth from a crevice in the bank, which gradually is converted into a small but deep ravine, and twenty paces thence it falls into the river with a merry, babbling sound. Oak bushes have overgrown the slopes of the ravine; around the spring, soft, velvety grass gleams green; the sun's rays hardly ever touch its cold, silvery waters. I reached the spring; on the grass lay a birch-bark dipper, left behind by some passing peasant for public use. I took a drink, lay down in the shade, and cast a glance around me. At the bay formed by the spring's entrance into the river, and for that reason always covered with a faint ripple, sat two old men, with their backs toward me. One of them, rather thickset and lofty of stature, in a neat, dark-green kaftan and a flat felt cap, was catching fish,—the other, a thin, small man in a patched seersucker short coat, and without a cap, was holding the pot of worms on his lap, and now and then passing his hand over his small grey head, as though desirous of protecting it from the sun. I looked more intently at him, and recognised in him Styópushka from Shumíkhino. I beg the reader's permission to introduce this man to him.

A few versts distant from my hamlet, lies the large village Shumíkhino, with a stone church,

erected in the name of Saints Kozmá and Damián. Opposite this church, a spacious manor-house of a landed proprietor formerly flaunted itself, surrounded by various outbuildings,—offices, work-shops, bath-houses, and temporary kitchens, detached wings for visitors and stewards, hot-houses for flowers, swings for the retainers, and other more or less useful structures.

In this mansion dwelt wealthy landed gentry, and everything was proceeding in an orderly manner with them,—when, all of a sudden, one fine morning, this whole blessed establishment [1] was burned to the ground. The gentry removed to another nest; the farm sank into a state of desolation. The vast heap of ashes where the manor had stood was converted into a vegetable-garden, encumbered here and there by piles of bricks, the remnants of the former foundations. A tiny hut had hastily been constructed from the surviving beams, covered with barge-planks,[2] which had been purchased ten years previously for the erection of a pavilion in the Gothic style; and the gardener, Mitrofán, with his wife, Aksínya, and their seven children were established therein. Mitrofán received orders to supply the master's table, one hundred and fifty versts dis-

[1] In the original, *blagodát*, blessing.—Translator.

[2] The barges used on Russian rivers to transport firewood and so forth are riveted together with huge wooden pegs only, and are broken up at the end of the voyage. The lavishly perforated planks sell for a very low price.—Translator.

tant, with fresh herbs and vegetables; to Aksínya was entrusted the oversight of the Tyrolean cow, which had been purchased at a high price in Moscow, but was unfortunately deprived of all possibility of reproduction, and, consequently, had never given any milk since she had been acquired; into her hands was given also a crested, smoke-coloured drake, the "quality's" sole fowl; no duties were assigned to the children, on account of their tender age, which, nevertheless, did not, in the least, prevent their becoming thoroughly lazy. I chanced to pass the night, on a couple of occasions, with this gardener,—I was in the habit of getting cucumbers from him in passing, which cucumbers, heaven knows why, were characterised even in summer by their size, their worthless, watery flavour, and their thick, yellow skin. It was at his house that I had seen Styópushka for the first time. With the exception of Mitrofán and his family, and of the deaf, old churchwarden, Gerásim, who lived as a charity in a tiny chamber at the house of the one-eyed soldier's widow, not a single house-serf remained in Shumíkhino, for it was not possible to regard Styópushka, whom I intend to introduce to the reader, either as a man in general, or as a house-serf in particular.

Every individual has at least some sort of position in society, some connection or other; every house-serf receives, if not wages, at least the so-

called "allowance": Styópushka received absolutely no aid, was related to no one, no one knew of his existence. This man had not even a past; no one mentioned him; it is hardly probable that he was even included in the revision-lists.[1] Obscure rumours were in circulation, to the effect that, once upon a time, he had been valet to some one; but who he was, whence he came, whose son he was, how he had got into the number of the Shumíkhino subjects, in what manner he had acquired the seersucker kaftan which he had worn from time immemorial, where he lived, what he lived on,—as to these points positively no one had the slightest idea, and, to tell the truth, no one bothered himself about these questions. Grandpa Trofímitch, who knew the genealogy of all the house-serfs in an ascending line back to the fourth generation, once said merely, that Stepán was related to a Turkish woman, whom the late master, Brigadier[2] Alexyéi Románitch, had been pleased to bring back with him from a campaign, in his baggage-train. And it even happened that, on festival days, days of universal gifts and hospitable entertainment, with buckwheat patties and green wine, after the ancient Russian custom,—even on such days,

[1] The revised lists of male serfs, made at intervals of years, in the pre-emancipation days, as a basis of taxation.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] A military rank between Colonel and Lieutenant-General, instituted by Peter the Great, and abolished under Paul I.—TRANSLATOR.

Styópushka was not wont to present himself at the tables set forth or at the casks of liquor, did not make his reverence, did not kiss the master's hand, did not drain off at a draught a glass under the master's eye and to the master's health, a glass filled by the fat hand of the superintendent,—perchance, some kind soul, in passing, would bestow upon the poor fellow the bit of patty which he had not been able to finish off. At Easter, people exchanged the kiss of greeting with him, but he did not tuck up his greasy sleeve, he did not pull a red egg out of his rear pocket, he did not present it, panting and blinking, to the young master, or even to the gentlewoman, the mistress herself. In summer, he lived in a pen behind the chicken-coop, and in winter, in the anteroom of the bath-house; in extremely cold weather he spent the night in the hay-loft. People got used to seeing him about, they even gave him a kick sometimes, but no one entered into conversation with him, and he himself, apparently, had never opened his mouth since he was born. After the conflagration, this forsaken man took refuge with the gardener, Mitrofán. The gardener let him alone, he did not say to him, "Live with me," but he did not turn him out of doors. And Styópushka did not live with the gardener: he lodged in, he hovered about, the vegetable-garden. He walked and moved without making a sound; he sneezed and coughed

into his hand, not without terror; he was eternally bustling about and making himself busy, like an ant; and all for his food, for his food alone. And, as a matter of fact, had he not worried about his nourishment from morning until night, —my Styópushka would have died of hunger. 'T is a bad thing not to know in the morning what you will have had to eat by nightfall! Now, Styópushka would be sitting under the hedge, gnawing at a radish, or sucking at a carrot, or crushing a dirty head of cabbage beneath him; again, he would be carrying a bucket of water somewhere or other, and grunting over it; and again, he would light a tiny fire under a pot, and fling some black morsels, drawn from the breast of his shirt, into the pot; or he would be pounding away at his own place in the store-room with a billet of wood, driving in a nail, or putting up a small shelf for his bread. And all this he did in silence, as though from around a corner: cast a glance, and he had already vanished. And then, all of a sudden, he would absent himself for a couple of days; of course, no one noticed his absence. . . . . And the first you knew, there he was again, somewhere near the hedge, placing chips stealthily under the tripod. His face was small, his eyes were yellowish, his hair grew clear down to his eyebrows, he had a small, pointed nose, very large ears, transparent like those of a bat, a beard which looked as apparently of a fort-

night's growth, never any more of it, never any less. This was the Styópushka whom I encountered on the bank of the Ísta, in the company of another old man.

I went up to him, bade him good morning, and seated myself by his side. In Styópushka's companion I recognised another acquaintance: he was a man who had belonged to Count Piótr Ílitch * * *, and had been set at liberty by him, Mikhaílo Savélitch, nicknamed The Fog (Tumán). He lived with the consumptive petty burgher of Bolkhóff who kept the posting-house, where I stopped quite frequently. The young officials and other persons of leisure who traverse the Orel highway (the merchants, laden with their striped feather-beds,[1] care not for it) can still see, at a short distance from the big, church-village of Tróitzkoe (Trinity), a huge, wooden, two-storied house utterly deserted, with roof falling to ruin, and windows tightly nailed up, which stands on the very verge of the road. At midday, in clear, sunny weather, nothing more melancholy can be imagined than this ruin. Here once dwelt Count Piótr Ílitch, famous for his hospitality, a wealthy grandee of the olden days. All the government used to assemble at his house, and dance and amuse themselves gloriously, to the deafening thunder of a home-trained orches-

[1] Even now, in some parts of Russia, mattresses, sheets, and towels must be carried by the traveller; and down-pillows, also, are very generally carried.—Translator.

tra, the crash of rockets and Roman candles; and, in all probability, more than one old woman, who now passes the deserted mansion of the gentry, sighs and recalls the days gone by, and her vanished youth. Long did the Count hold wassail, long did he stroll about, with a courteous smile, among the throng of his obsequious guests; but, unhappily, his estate did not hold out to the end of his life. Completely ruined, he betook himself to Petersburg, sought a place in the service, and died in a hotel chamber, before he had received an answer. The Fog had served as his butler, and had received his emancipation papers during the Count's lifetime. He was a man of sixty, with a regular and agreeable countenance. He smiled almost constantly, as only people of Katherine the Second's time do smile nowadays, good-naturedly and majestically; when he talked, he slowly thrust forward and compressed his lips, caressingly screwed up his eyes, and uttered his words somewhat through his nose. He blew his nose and took snuff in a leisurely way also, as though he were engaged in serious business.

"Well, how goes it, Mikhaílo Savélitch,"—I began:—"hast thou caught any fish?"

"Why, please to look in the basket yonder: I 've caught two perch, and five small mullet. . . . Show them, Styópka."

Styópushka held the wicker basket toward me.

"How art thou getting on, Stepán?"—I asked him.

"L . . . . i . . . . i . . . a-a . . . . so-so-o, dear little father, pretty well,"—replied Stepán, stammering as though a pud weight were hung on his tongue.

"And is Mitrofán well?"

"Yes, o-o-of . . . . . course, dear little father."

The poor fellow turned away.

"The fish are n't biting well, somehow,"—remarked The Fog:—"it 's awfully hot; the fish have all hidden themselves under the bushes, and gone to sleep. . . . . Bait the hook with a worm, Styópa." (Styópushka got a worm, laid it on his palm, gave it a couple of whacks, put it on the hook, spat on it, and gave it to The Fog.)

"Thanks, Styópa. . . . And you, dear little father,"—he went on, turning to me:—"you are pleased to go a-hunting?"

"As you see."

"Just so, sir. . . . . And what 's that hound of yours, English or some sort of Kurland animal?"

The old man was fond of showing off: as much as to say, "We 've seen the world also!"

"I don't know of what breed he is, but he 's a good one."

"Just so, sir. . . . And are you pleased to travel with dogs?"

"I have a couple of leashes."

The Fog smiled, and shook his head.

"That 's exactly the way: one man is fond of dogs, and another would n't take them as a gift. What I think, according to my simple judgment, is: that dogs should be kept more for the dignity of the thing, so to speak. . . . . And that everything should be kept in style: and that the horses should be in style, as is proper, and everything in style. The late Count—may the kingdom of heaven be his!—was not a sportsman by nature, I must admit; but he kept dogs, and was pleased to go out with them a couple of times a year. The whippers-in would assemble in the courtyard, in scarlet kaftans trimmed with galloon, and blow blasts on their horns; his Illustriousness would condescend to come out, and his Illustriousness's horse would be led up; his Illustriousness would mount, and the head huntsman would put his feet into the stirrups, take off his cap, and present the reins to him in it. His Illustriousness would deign to crack his hunting-crop, and the whippers-in would begin to halloo, and move away from the courtyard. A groom would ride behind his Illustriousness, and lead the master's two favourite hounds in a leash, with his own hands, and would so keep a watch, you know. . . . . And he sits high aloft, the groom does, on a kazák saddle,[1] such a rosy-cheeked fellow he was, and rolls his little eyes

[1] The kazák saddle has a fat down-cushion, between a high pommel and high back.—TRANSLATOR.

around. . . . . Well, and of course there were guests on this occasion. And amusement and honour were observed. . . . Akh, he has broken loose, the Asiatic!"—he suddenly added, pulling out his hook.

"They say that the Count led a pretty lively life in his day—how was that?"—I asked.

The old man spat on the worm, and flung in his hook.

"He was a very lordly man, everybody knew, sir. The leading persons from Petersburg, as one may say, used to come to visit him. They used to sit at table and eat in their blue ribbons. Well, and he was a master-hand at entertaining them. He would summon me to him: 'Fog,' says he, 'I require some live sterlet to-morrow; order them to be procured, dost thou hear?'—'I obey, your Illustriousness.' He used to import embroidered coats, wigs, canes, perfumes, ladekolon[1] snuff-boxes, such huge pictures, of the best quality, from Paris itself. He would give a banquet,—O Lord and Sovereign Master of my life![2] what fireworks and pleasure-drives there would be! They would even fire off cannon. There were forty musicians alone on hand. He kept a German bandmaster; and the German was awfully conceited: he wanted to eat at the same table with the gentlemen and ladies; so his

[1] Eau de Cologne.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] A quotation from a familiar prayer, by St. Ephraim of Syria, used during the Great Fast (Lent).—TRANSLATOR.

Illustriousness gave orders that he should be turned out of doors, and bidden godspeed: 'My musicians understand their business without him,' says he. You know how it was: the master had the power to do as he liked. They would set to dancing, and dance until dawn, and chiefly the lakosez-matradura . . . . .[1] eh . . . . . eh . . . . . eh . . . . . thou art caught, brother!" . . . . (The old man pulled a small perch out of the water.) "Take it, Styópa.—He was the right sort of a master, the master was,"—pursued the old man, throwing his line again:—"and he was a kind soul too! He 'd thrash you, on occasion—and the first you knew, he 'd have forgotten all about it. Okh, those mistresses, Lord forgive! 'T was they that ruined him. And, you see, he chose them chiefly from the lower classes. You 'd suppose that they could n't want for anything more. But no,—you must give them the most costly thing in the whole of Europe! And I must say: why not live at ease,—that 's the proper thing for a gentleman . . . . . but as for ruining yourself, that 's not right. There was one in particular: her name was Akulína; she 's dead now,—the kingdom of heaven be hers! She was a simple wench, the daughter of the village policeman of Sitóvo, and such a termagant! She used to slap the Count's cheeks. She bewitched him utterly. She shaved the brow of my

[1] L'écossais.—Translator.

nephew:[1] he had spilled chocolate on her new gown . . . . and he was not the only one whose brow she shaved. Yes. . . . . And nevertheless, it was a good little time!"—added the old man, with a deep sigh, as he dropped his eyes and relapsed into silence.

"But you had a severe master, I see,"—I began, after a brief pause.

"That was the taste then, dear little father,"—returned the old man, shaking his head.

"That is no longer done now,"—I remarked, without removing my eyes from him.

He surveyed me with a sidelong glance.

"Now, things are better, certainly,"—he muttered—and flung his line far out.

We were sitting in the shade; but even in the shade it was stifling. The heavy, sultry air seemed to have died down; the burning face sought the breeze with anguish, but there was no breeze. The sun fairly beat from the blue, darkling sky; directly in front of us, on the other shore, a field of oats gleamed yellow, overgrown here and there with wormwood, and not a single ear of the grain stirred. A little lower down, a peasant's horse was standing in the river up to his knees, and lazily swishing himself with his wet tail; now and then, a large fish swam up under an overhanging bush, emitted a bubble,

[1] That is, had him made a soldier for the long term then obligatory. The hair was shaved to mark the man and prevent desertion.—TRANSLATOR.

and gently sank to the bottom, leaving behind him a faint surge. The grasshoppers were shrilling in the rusty grass; the quails were calling in a reluctant sort of way; hawks floated above the fields, and frequently came to a standstill, swiftly fluttering their wings, and spreading out their tails like a fan. We sat motionless, overwhelmed with the heat. All at once, behind us, in the ravine, a noise resounded: some one was descending to the spring. I looked round, and beheld a peasant about fifty years of age, dusty, in shirt and bark-slippers, with a plaited birch-bark wallet and a long coat thrown over his shoulders. He approached the spring, drank eagerly, and rose to his feet.

"Eh, Vlas?"—cried The Fog, taking a look at him:—"good day, brother. Whence has God brought thee?"

"Good day, Mikhaílo Savélitch,"—said the peasant, advancing toward us,—"from afar."

"Where hast thou been?"—The Fog asked him.

"I have been to Moscow, to the master."

"Why?"

"I went to petition him."

"To petition him about what?"

"Why, that he would reduce my quit-rent, or put me on husbandry-service, or send me for settlement elsewhere, perhaps. . . . My son is dead —so I can't manage it now alone."

"Is thy son dead?"

"Yes. The deceased,"—added the peasant, after a brief silence:—"lived in Moscow, as a cabman; I must confess that he paid my quit-rent."

"But is it possible that thou art on quit-rent now?"

"Yes."

"What did thy master say?"

"What did the master say? He drove me off! 'How darest thou come straight to me,' says he; 'thou art bound to report first to the steward . . . . and where am I to transfer thee for settlement? Do thou first,' says he, 'pay up thine arrears.' He was thoroughly angry."

"Well, and so thou hast come back?"

"So I have come home. I should have liked to find out whether the deceased had left any goods behind him, but I could n't get a straight answer. I says to his employer, says I: 'I 'm Philip's father;' and he says to me: 'How do I know that?—And thy son left nothing,' says he; 'he 's in debt to me, to boot.' Well, and so I went my way."

The peasant told us all this with a grin, as though it were a question of some one else; but a tear welled up in his small, puckered-up eyes, and his lips quivered.

"Art thou going home now?"

"Why, where else should I be going? Of

course, I 'm going home. My wife must be whistling into her fist now with hunger, I think."

" But thou mightest . . . knowest thou . . ." began Styópushka suddenly,—then grew confused, stopped short, and began to rummage in the pot.

" And shalt thou go to the steward? "—went on The Fog, glancing at Styópa not without surprise.

" Why should I go to him? . . . . I 'm in arrears, anyway. My son was ailing for about a year before he died, so that he did not pay even his own quit-rent. . . . And I don't care: there is nothing to be got from me. . . . Be as crafty as you will here, brother,—'t is in vain: my head is not responsible! " The peasant broke into a laugh. " Kintilyán Semyónitch may worry over it as he will . . . . but . . . ."

Again Vlas laughed.

" Well, that 's bad, brother Vlas,"—articulated The Fog, pausing between his words.

" How is it bad? No. . . . ." Vlas's voice broke. " How hot it is! "—he went on, mopping his brow with his sleeve.

" Who is your master? "—I inquired.

" Count * * *, Valerián Petróvitch."

" The son of Piótr Ílitch? "

" Yes, the son of Piótr Ílitch,"—replied The Fog. " The deceased Piótr Ílitch allotted Vlas's village to him during his lifetime."

" Is the Count well? "

"Yes, thank God,"—responded Vlas.—"Handsome as steel, his face is as though it were stuffed with fat."

"See there, dear little father,"—continued The Fog, turning to me:—"it would be all right near Moscow, but he has put him on quit-rent here."

"But at how much a household?"

"Ninety-five rubles a household,"—muttered Vlas.

"Well, there now, you see; and there 's only the littlest bit of ground, because 't is all the master's forest."

"And they say he has sold that,"—remarked the peasant.

"Well, there now, you see . . . . Styópa, give me a worm. . . . . Hey, Styópa? What 's the matter with thee? hast thou fallen asleep?"

Styópushka started. The peasant sat down beside us. Again we maintained silence for a while. On the other shore, some one started up a song, and such a mournful one! . . . My poor Vlas grew dejected. . . . . .

Half an hour later we parted company.

IV

THE DISTRICT DOCTOR

One day, in autumn, on my way home from the distant fields, I caught cold, and was taken ill. Fortunately, the fever overtook me in the county-town, in the hotel. I sent for the doctor. Half an hour later, the district physician made his appearance, a man of short stature, thin and black-haired. He prescribed for me the customary sudorific, ordered the application of mustard-plasters, very deftly tucked my five-ruble bank-note under his cuff,—but emitted a dry cough and glanced aside as he did so,—and was on the very verge of going off about his own affairs, but somehow got to talking and remained. The fever oppressed me; I foresaw a sleepless night, and was glad to chat with the kindly man. Tea was served. My doctor began to talk. He was far from a stupid young fellow, and expressed himself vigorously and quite entertainingly. Strange things happen in the world: you may live a long time, and on friendly terms, with one man, and never once speak frankly from your soul with him; with another you hardly manage to make acquaintance—and behold:

either you have blurted out to him your most secret thoughts, as though you were at confession, or he has blurted out his to you. I know not how I won the confidence of my new friend,—only, without rhyme or reason, as the saying is, he "took" and told me about a rather remarkable occurrence; and now I am going to impart his narrative to the indulgent reader. I shall endeavour to express myself in the physician's words.

"You are not acquainted,"—he began, in a weak and quavering voice (such is the effect of unadulterated Beryózoff snuff):—"you are not acquainted with the judge here, Pável Lúkitch Mýloff, are you? . . . . . You are not? . . . . . Well, never mind." (He cleared his throat and wiped his eyes.) "Well, then, please to observe that the affair happened—to be accurate—during the Great Fast, in the very height of the thaw. I was sitting with him at his house, our judge's, and playing preference. Our judge is a nice man, and fond of playing preference. All of a sudden" (my doctor frequently employed that expression: "all of a sudden") "I am told: 'A man is asking for you.' 'What does he want?'—said I. They tell me: 'He has brought a note—it must be from a sick person.' —'Give me the note,'—said I. And so it proved to be from a sick person. . . . . Well, very good,—that 's our bread and butter, you un-

derstand. . . . . And this was what was the matter: the person who wrote to me was a landed proprietress, a widow; she says: 'My daughter is dying, come for the sake of our Lord God, and horses have been sent for you.' Well, and all that is of no consequence. . . . . But she lives twenty versts from town, night is falling, and the roads are such, that—faugh! And she herself was the poorest of the poor, I could n't expect to receive more than two rubles,[1] and even that much was doubtful; and, in all probability, I should be obliged to take a bolt of crash-linen and some scraps or other. However, you understand, duty before everything. All of a sudden, I hand over my cards to Kalliópin, and set off homeward. I look: a wretched little peasant-cart is standing in front of my porch; peasant-horses,—pot-bellied, extremely pot-bellied,—the hair on them a regular matted felt; and the coachman is sitting hatless, by way of respect. Well, thinks I to myself: evidently, brother, thy masters don't eat off gold. . . . . You are pleased to laugh, but I can tell you a poor man, like myself, takes everything into consideration. . . . . If the coachman sits like a prince, and does n't doff his cap, and grins in his beard to

[1] The doctor's fee, as fixed by law, in Russia, is absurdly small. Every one, therefore, gives what he sees fit—certain prices being only tacitly understood as proper for certain men. The doctor is supposed to accept what is offered, and it is contrary to etiquette for him to remonstrate against the sum.—TRANSLATOR.

boot, and waggles his whip, you may bet boldly on getting a couple of bank-bills! But, in this case, I see that the matter does not smack of that. However, thought I to myself, it can't be helped: duty before everything. I catch up the most indispensable remedies, and set out. Will you believe it, we barely managed to drag ourselves to our goal. The road was hellish: brooks, snow, mud, water-washed gullies; for, all of a sudden, a dam had burst—alas! Notwithstanding, I got there. The house is tiny, with a straw-thatched roof. The windows are illuminated: which signifies, that they are expecting me. An old woman comes out to receive me,—such a dignified old woman, in a mob-cap; 'Save her,' says she, 'she is dying.' 'Pray don't worry,' I say to her. . . . . 'Where is the patient?'—'Here, please come this way.'—I look: 't is a neat little room, in the corner a shrine-lamp, on the bed a girl of twenty years, unconscious. She is fairly burning with heat, she breathes heavily:—'t is fever. There are two other young girls present, her sisters,—thoroughly frightened, in tears.—'See there,' say they, 'yesterday she was perfectly well, and ate with appetite: this morning she complained of her head, and toward evening, all of a sudden, she got into this condition.' . . . . I said again: 'Pray don't worry,'—you know, the doctor is bound to say that,—and set to work. I let blood, ordered the appli-

cation of mustard-plasters, prescribed a potion. In the meantime, I looked and looked at her, and do you know:—well, upon my word, I never before had seen such a face . . . . a beauty, in one word! I fairly go to pieces with compassion. Such pleasing features, eyes . . . . . Well, thank God, she quieted down; the perspiration broke out, she seemed to regain consciousness, cast a glance around her, smiled, passed her hand over her face. . . . . Her sisters bent over her, and inquired: 'What ails thee?'—'Nothing,'—says she, and turned away. . . . . I look . . and lo, she has fallen asleep. 'Well,' I say, 'now the patient must be left in peace.' So we all went out of the room on tiptoe; only the maid remained, in case she should be needed. And in the drawing-room, the samovár was already standing on the table, and there was Jamaica rum also: in our business, we cannot get along without it. They gave me tea, and begged me to spend the night there. . . . I consented: what was the use of going away now! The old woman kept moaning. 'What 's the matter with you?' said I: 'she 'll live, pray do not feel uneasy, and the best thing you can do is to get some rest yourself: it 's two o'clock.'—'But will you give orders that I am to be awakened, if anything should happen?'—'I will, I will.'—The old woman went off, and the girls also betook themselves to their own room; they made up a bed

for me in the drawing-room. So I lay down,—but I could n't get to sleep,—and no wonder! I seemed to be fretting over something. I could n't get my sick girl out of my mind. At last, I could endure it no longer, and all of a sudden, I got up: I thought: ' I 'll go and see how the patient is getting along.' Her bedroom adjoined the drawing-room. Well, I rose, and opened the door softly,—and my heart began to beat violently. I took a look: the maid was fast asleep, with her mouth open, and even snoring, the beast! and the sick girl was lying with her face toward me, and throwing her arms about, the poor thing! I went up to her. . . All of a sudden, she opened her eyes, and fixed them on me! . . . . . ' Who is this? Who is this?'—I was disconcerted.—'Don't be alarmed, madam,' said I: ' I 'm the doctor, I have come to see how you are feeling.'—' You are the doctor? '—' Yes, the doctor. . . . . Your mamma sent to the town for me; we have bled you, madam; now, please to lie quiet, and in a couple of days, God willing, we 'll have you on your feet again.'—' Akh, yes, yes, doctor, don't let me die . . . . please, please don't! '—' What makes you say that, God bless you! '—' Her fever is starting up again,' I thought to myself. I felt her pulse: it was the fever, sure enough. She looked at me,—then, all of a sudden, she seized my hand.—' I 'll tell you why I don't want to die, I 'll tell you, I 'll tell you . . . . now we

are alone; only, if you please, you must n't let anybody know . . . . listen!' . . . . I bent down; she brought her lips to my very ear, her hair swept my cheek,—I confess that my head reeled, —and began to whisper. . . . . I could understand nothing. . . . . Akh, why, she was delirious. . . . . She whispered and whispered, and very rapidly at that, and not in Russian, finished, shuddered, dropped her head back on the pillow, and menaced me with her finger.—' See that you tell no one, doctor.' . . . Somehow or other, I contrived to soothe her, gave her a drink, waked up the maid, and left the room."

Here the doctor took snuff frantically, and grew torpid for a moment.

" But, contrary to my expectation,"—he went on,—" the patient was no better on the following day. I cogitated, and cogitated, and all of a sudden, I decided to remain, although other patients were expecting me. . . . But, you know, that cannot be neglected: your practice suffers from it. But, in the first place, the sick girl was, really, in a desperate condition; and, in the second place, I must tell the truth, I felt strongly attracted to her. Moreover, the whole family pleased me. Although they were not wealthy people, yet their culture was, I may say, rare. . . .. Their father had been a learned man, a writer; he had died in poverty, of course, but had managed to impart a splendid education

to his children; he had also left behind him many books. Whether it was because I worked so zealously over the sick girl, or for other reasons, at all events, I venture to assert that they became as fond of me as though I had been a relative. . . . . In the meantime, the thaw had reduced the roads to a frightful condition: all communications were, so to speak, utterly cut off. . . . The sick girl did not get well . . . day after day, day after day. . . . But so, sir . . . . then, sir . . . ." (The doctor paused for a while).—" Really, I do not know how to state it to you, sir . . ." (Again he took snuff, grunted, and swallowed a mouthful of tea.) " I will tell you, without circumlocution,—my patient . . . . anyhow . . . . well, either she fell in love with me . . . . . or, no, she did n't exactly fall in love with me . . . but, anyway . . . really, how shall I put it? . . ." (The doctor dropped his eyes, and flushed crimson.)

" No,"—he went on with vivacity:—" she did n't fall in love with me! One must, after all, estimate one's self at one's true value. She was a cultivated girl, clever, well-read, and I had forgotten even my Latin, completely, I may say. So far as my figure is concerned " (the doctor surveyed himself with a smile), " also, I have nothing to boast of, apparently. But the Lord God did n't distort me into a fool, either: I won't call white black; I understand a thing or two

myself. For example, I understood very well indeed that Alexandra Andréevna—her name was Alexandra Andréevna—did not feel love for me, but, so to speak, a friendly inclination, respect, something of that sort. Although she herself, possibly, was mistaken on that point, yet her condition was such, as you can judge for yourself . . . . . However,"—added the doctor, who had uttered all these disjointed speeches without stopping to take breath, and with obvious embarrassment:—" I have strayed from the subject a bit, I think. . . . So you will not understand anything . . . . . but here now, with your permission, I 'll tell you the whole story in due order."

He finished his glass of tea, and began to talk in a more composed voice.

" Well, then, to proceed, sir. My patient grew constantly worse, and worse, and worse. You are not a medical man, my dear sir; you cannot comprehend what takes place in the soul of a fellow-being, especially when he first begins to divine that his malady is conquering him. What becomes of his self-confidence! All of a sudden, you grow inexpressibly timid. It seems to you, that you have forgotten everything you ever knew, and that the patient does not trust you and that others are beginning to observe that you have lost your wits, and communicate the symptoms to you unwillingly, gaze askance at you,

whisper together . . . . . eh, 't is an evil plight! But there certainly must be a remedy for this malady, you think, if you could only find it. Here now, is n't this it? You try it—no, that 's not it! You don't give the medicine time to act properly . . . . now you grasp at this, now at that. You take your prescription-book, —it certainly must be there, you think. To tell the truth, you sometimes open it at haphazard: perchance Fate, you think to yourself . . . . . But, in the meanwhile, the person is dying; and some other physician might have saved him. A consultation is necessary, you say: 'I will not assume the responsibility.' And what a fool you seem under such circumstances! Well, and you 'll learn to bear it patiently, in course of time you won't mind it. The man dies—it is no fault of yours: you have followed the rules. But there 's another torturing thing about it: you behold blind confidence in you, and you yourself feel that you are not capable of helping. Well then, that was precisely the sort of confidence that Alexandra Andréevna's whole family had in me:—and they forgot to think that their daughter was in danger. I, also, on my side, assured them that it was all right, while my soul sank into my heels. To crown the calamity, the thaw and breaking up of the roads were so bad, that the coachman would travel whole days at a time in quest of medicine. And I never left

the sick-chamber, I could n't tear myself away, you know, I related ridiculous little anecdotes, and played cards with her. I sat up all night. My old woman thanked me with tears; but I thought to myself: 'I don't deserve your gratitude.' I will confess to you frankly,—there 's no reason why I should dissimulate now,—I had fallen in love with my patient. And Alexandra Andréevna had become attached to me: she would let no one but me enter the room. She would begin to chat with me, and would interrogate me—where I had studied, how I lived, who were my parents, whom did I visit? And I felt that she ought not to talk, but as for prohibiting her, positively, you know, I could n't do it. I would clutch my head:—'What art thou doing, thou villain?'—But then, she would take my hand, and hold it, and gaze at me, gaze long, very long, turn away, sigh, and say: 'How kind you are!' Her hands were so hot, her eyes were big and languishing.—'Yes,' she would say,—'you are a good man, you are not like our neighbours . . . no, you are not that sort. . . . How is it that I have never known you until now!' —'Calm yourself, Alexandra Andréevna,'—I would say. . . . 'I assure you, I feel I do not know how I have merited . . . . only, compose yourself, for God's sake . . . . everything will be all right, you will get well.'—And yet, I must confess to you," added the doctor, bending for-

ward, and elevating his eyebrows:—" that they had very little to do with the neighbours, because the lower sort were not their equals, and pride prevented their becoming acquainted with the rich ones. As I have told you, it was an extremely cultured family:—and, so, you know, I felt flattered. She would take her medicine from no hands but mine . . . she would sit up half-way, the poor girl, with my assistance, take it, and look at me . . . . and my heart would fairly throb. But, in the meantime, she grew worse and worse: ' She will die,' I thought, ' she will infallibly die.' Will you believe it, I felt like lying down in the grave myself: but her mother and sisters were watching, and looking me in the eye . . . . and their confidence disappeared.

" ' What is it? What is the matter? '—' Nothing, ma'am; 't is all right, ma'am! '—but it was n't all right, I had merely lost my head! Well, sir, one night I was sitting alone once more, beside the sick girl. The maid was sitting in the room also, and snoring with all her might. . . . Well, there was no use in being hard on the unfortunate maid: she was harassed enough. Alexandra Andréevna had been feeling very badly all the evening; she was tortured by the fever. She kept tossing herself about clear up to midnight; at last, she seemed to fall asleep; at all events, she did not stir, but lay quietly. The shrine-lamp was burning in front of the

holy picture in the corner. I was sitting, you know, with drooping head, and dozing also. All of a sudden, I felt exactly as though some one had nudged me in the ribs. I turned round. . . O Lord, my God! Alexandra Andréevna was staring at me with all her eyes . . . . . her lips parted, her cheeks fairly blazing.—'What is the matter with you?'—'Doctor, surely I am dying?'—'God forbid!'—'No, doctor, no; please don't tell me that I shall recover . . . . don't tell me . . . if you only knew . . . listen, for God's sake, don't conceal my condition from me!'—and she breathed very fast.—'If I know for certain that I must die . . . . I will tell you everything, everything!'—'For heaven's sake, Alexandra Andréevna!'—'Listen, I have n't been asleep at all, you see; I 've been watching you this long while . . . . for God's sake . . . I believe in you, you are a kind man, you are an honest man; I adjure you, by all that is holy on earth—tell me the truth! If you only knew how important it is to me. . . Doctor, tell me, for God's sake, am I in danger?'—'What shall I say to you, Alexandra Andréevna, for mercy's sake!'—'For God's sake, I beseech you!'—'I cannot conceal from you, Alexandra Andréevna, the fact that you really are in danger, but God is merciful . . . . . .'—'I shall die, I shall die!' . . . . And she seemed to be glad, her face became so cheerful; I was frightened.—'But don't be afraid,

don't be afraid, death does not terrify me in the least.'—All of a sudden, she raised herself up, and propped herself on her elbow.—'Now . . . . well, now I can tell you that I am grateful to you with all my soul, that you are a kind, good man, that I love you.' . . . . I stared at her like a crazy man; dread fell upon me, you know. . . 'Do you hear?—I love you!' . . . . 'Alexandra Andréevna, how have I deserved this!'—'No, no, you don't understand me . . . . thou dost not understand me.' . . . . And all of a sudden, she stretched out her arms, clasped my head, and kissed me. . . . Will you believe it, I came near shrieking aloud. . . . . I flung myself on my knees, and hid my head in the pillow. She was silent; her fingers trembled on my hair; I heard her weeping. I began to comfort her, to reassure her . . . . to tell the truth, I really do not know what I said to her.—'You will waken the maid, Alexandra Andréevna,' I said to her. . . 'I thank you . . . . believe me . . . . calm yourself.'—'Yes, enough, enough,' she repeated. 'God be with them all; well, they will wake; well, they will come—it makes no difference: for I shall die. . . . . But why art thou timid, what dost thou fear? raise thy head. . . . Can it be myself? . . . . in that case, forgive me,'—'Alexandra Andréevna, what are you saying? . . . . I love you, Alexandra Andréevna.'—She looked me straight in the eye, and opened her arms.

—' Then embrace me.' . . I will tell you frankly: I don't understand why I did not go crazy that night. I was conscious that my patient was killing herself; I saw that she was not quite clear in her head; I understood, also, that had she not thought herself on the brink of death, she would not have thought of me; for, you may say what you like, 't is a terrible thing, all the same, to die at the age of twenty, without having loved any one: that is what was tormenting her, you see; that is why she, in her despair, clutched even at me,—do you understand now? But she did not release me from her arms.—' Spare me, Alexandra Andréevna, and spare yourself also,' I said. —' Why should I? ' she said. ' For I must die, you know.' . . . She kept repeating this incessantly.—' See here, now; if I knew that I would recover, and become an honest young lady again, I should be ashamed, actually ashamed . . . . but as it is, what does it matter? '—' But who told you that you were going to die? '—' Eh, no, enough of that, thou canst not deceive me, thou dost not know how to lie; look at thyself.'—' You will live, Alexandra Andréevna; I will cure you. We will ask your mother's blessing on our marriage. . . . We will unite ourselves in the bonds. . . We shall be happy.'—' No, no, I have taken your word for it, I must die . . . . thou hast promised me . . . thou hast told me so.' . . . This was bitter to me, bitter for many reasons. And you

can judge for yourself, what trifling things happen: they seem to be nothing, yet they hurt. She took it into her head to ask me what my name was,—not my surname, but my baptismal name. My ill-luck decreed that it should be Trífon. Yes, sir, yes, sir; Trífon, Trífon Ivánovitch. Everybody in the house addressed me as doctor. There was no help for it, I said: 'Trífon, madam.' She narrowed her eyes, shook her head, and whispered something in French,—okh, yes, and it was something bad, and then she laughed, and in an ugly way too. Well, and I spent the greater part of the night with her in that manner. In the morning, I left the room, as though I had been a madman; I went into her room again by daylight, after tea. My God, my God! She was unrecognisable: corpses have more colour when they are laid in their coffins. I swear to you, by my honour, I do not understand now, I positively do not understand, how I survived that torture. Three days, three nights more did my patient linger on . . . . and what nights they were! What was there that she did not say to me! . . . . And, on the last night, just imagine,—I was sitting beside her, and beseeching one thing only of God: 'Take her to Thyself, as speedily as may be, and me along with her.' . . . All of a sudden, the old mother bursts into the room. . . . . I had already told her, on the preceding day, that there was but little hope, that

the girl was in a bad way, and that it would not be out of place to send for the priest. As soon as the sick girl beheld her mother, she said:—'Well, now, 't is a good thing thou hast come . . . look at us, we love each other, we have given each other our promise.'—'What does she mean, doctor, what does she mean?'—I turned deathly pale.—'She 's delirious, ma'am,' said I; 't is the fever heat.' . . But the girl said: 'Enough of that, enough of that, thou hast just said something entirely different to me, and hast accepted a ring from me. . . . . Why dost thou dissimulate? My mother is kind, she will forgive, she will understand; but I am dying—I have no object in lying; give me thy hand.' . . . . I sprang up and fled from the room. The old woman, of course, guessed how things stood.

"But I will not weary you, and I must admit that it is painful to me to recall all this. My patient died on the following day. The kingdom of heaven be hers!" added the doctor hastily, with a sigh. "Before she died, she asked her family to leave the room, and leave me alone with her.—'Forgive me,'—she said,—'perhaps I am culpable in your sight . . . . . my illness . . . but, believe me, I have never loved any one more than I have loved you . . . . do not forget me . . . . take care of my ring.' . . . . ."

The doctor turned away; I took his hand.

"Ekh,"—he said,—"let 's talk of something

else, or would n't you like to play preference for a while? Men like us, you know, ought not to yield to such lofty sentiments. All we fellows have to think of is: how to keep the children from squalling, and our wives from scolding. For since then, you see, I have managed to contract a legal marriage, as the saying is. . . Of course . . . . I took a merchant's daughter: she had seven thousand rubles of dowry. Her name is Akulína; just a match for Trífon. She 's a vixen, I must tell you; but, luckily, she sleeps all day. . . But how about that game of preference?"

We sat down to play preference, for kopék stakes. Trífon Ivánitch won two rubles and a half from me—and went away late, greatly elated with his victory.

V

MY NEIGHBOUR RADÍLOFF

In autumn, the woodcock frequently take up their stand in ancient linden parks. We have a good many such parks in the Government of Orel. Our great-grandfathers, in selecting residence sites, invariably laid out a couple of desyatínas of good land in a fruit-orchard, with alleys of linden-trees. During the last fifty—at the most, seventy—years, these farms, these "noblemen's nests," have been gradually disappearing from the face of the earth; their manors have rotted away or have been sold for removal, the stone offices have become converted into heaps of ruins, the apple-trees have died out and gone for firewood, the fences and wattled hedges have been annihilated. Only the lindens have thriven gloriously as of yore, and now, surrounded by tilled fields, proclaim to our volatile race "our fathers and brethren departed this life." [1] A most beautiful tree is such an aged linden.

[1] A quotation from the "augmented litany" in the services of the Eastern Catholic Church: "Furthermore, we pray for .... all our devout fathers and brethren departed this life before us, Orthodox believers, who here, and in all the world, lie asleep in the Lord."—Translator.

. . . . . Even the ruthless axe of the Russian peasant spares it. Its leaves are small, its mighty boughs spread out widely in all directions, beneath them reigns eternal shadow.

One day, as I was roving with Ermolái over the fields in quest of partridges, I espied on one side an abandoned park, and directed my footsteps thither. No sooner had I entered the edge of the grove than a woodcock rose with a whir from the bushes. I fired, and at the same moment a cry rang out a few paces from me: the frightened face of a young girl peered forth from behind the trees, and immediately vanished. Ermolái rushed up to me.—" Why do you shoot here? A landed proprietor lives here."

Before I could answer him, before my dog, with noble dignity, could fetch me the bird I had killed, hasty footsteps made themselves audible, and a man of lofty stature, with moustaches, emerged from the grove, and halted in front of me, with an aspect of displeasure. I made my excuses as best I might, mentioned my name, and offered him the bird which had been shot on his domain.

" Very well,"—he said to me, with a smile, " I will accept your game, but only on one condition: that you will stay to dinner with us."

I must confess that I was not greatly pleased at his suggestion, but it was impossible to refuse.

" I am the proprietor who lives here, and your

neighbour, Radíloff; perhaps you have heard of me,"—went on my new acquaintance:—" this is Sunday, and my dinner ought to be fairly decent, otherwise I would not have invited you."

I made the sort of reply which is customary on such occasions, and started to follow him. The recently cleaned path soon led us out of the linden grove; we entered the kitchen-garden. Among the aged apple-trees and overgrown gooseberry bushes gleamed round, pale-green heads of cabbage; hop-vines garlanded the tall poles in festoons; dark-brown sticks rose in dense array from the beds, entangled with dried pea-vines; huge, flat squashes seemed to be wallowing on the ground; cucumbers gleamed yellow from beneath their dusty, angular leaves; along the wattled fence tall nettles rocked to and fro; in two or three places Tatár honeysuckle, elder-trees, and sweet-briar grew in masses,—the remains of bygone " flower-plots." By the side of a small fish-pond, filled with reddish and slimy water, a well was visible, surrounded by puddles. Ducks were busily splashing and waddling in these puddles; a dog, trembling all over and with eyes screwed up, was gnawing a bone in the open glade; a piebald cow was nipping idly at the grass there, now and then flirting her tail over her gaunt back. The path swerved aside; from behind thick willows and birches, there peeped forth at us a small, aged grey house, with a board

roof and a crooked porch. Radíloff halted.—"By the way,"—he said good-naturedly, looking me square in the face:—"Now I come to think of it; perhaps you don't want to enter my house at all; in that case . . . . ."

I did not give him an opportunity to finish, and assured him that, on the contrary, it would give me great pleasure to dine with him.

"Well, as you like."

We entered the house. A young fellow in a long kaftan of heavy blue cloth met us on the porch. Radíloff immediately ordered him to give Ermolái some vódka; my huntsman made a respectful obeisance to the back of the magnanimous giver. From the anteroom, papered with divers motley-hued pictures and hung around with cages, we entered a small room—Radíloff's study. I took off my hunting accoutrements, and set my gun in one corner; the young fellow in the long-tailed kaftan brushed me off with alacrity.

"Come, now let us go into the drawing-room,"—said Radíloff, cordially:—"I will introduce you to my mother."

I followed him. In the drawing-room, on the central divan, sat an old lady of short stature, in a light-brown gown and a white mob-cap, with a kindly, emaciated face, a timid and mournful gaze.

"Here, mother, let me introduce our neighbour, * * *."

The old lady half-rose, and bowed to me, without letting go her hold on a coarse worsted reticule in the shape of a bag.

"Have you been long in our parts?"—she asked, in a weak and gentle voice, blinking her eyes.

"No, madam, not long."

"Do you intend to stay here long?"

"Until winter, I think."

The old lady relapsed into silence.

"And here,"—joined in Radíloff, pointing to a tall, thin man, whom I had not noticed on entering the drawing-room:—"this is Feódor Mikhyéitch. . . . Come on, Fédya, show the visitor thine art. Why hast thou tucked thyself into a corner?"

Feódor Mikhyéitch immediately rose from his chair, picked up from the window-sill a miserable fiddle, grasped his bow—not by the end, as is the proper way, but by the middle, leaned the fiddle against his breast, shut his eyes, and began to dance, singing a song and sawing away on the strings. Judging from his appearance, he was seventy years old; a long nankeen coat dangled mournfully against his thin, bony limbs. He danced; now he shook his small, bald head in a dashing way, again he twisted it about, stretched out his sinewy neck, stamped his feet up and down on one spot, and sometimes, with evident difficulty, he bent his knees. His toothless mouth emitted a decrepit voice. Radíloff must have

divined, from the expression of my face, that Fédya's " art " did not afford me much pleasure.

" Come, very good, old man, that will do,"—he said:—" thou mayest go and reward thyself."

Feódor Mikhyéitch immediately laid the fiddle on the window-sill, bowed first to me, as visitor, then to the old lady, then to Radíloff, and left the room.

" He was once a landed proprietor also,"—pursued my new friend:—" and a rich one, but he ruined himself—so now he lives with me . . . . but in his day he was regarded as the leading gay rake in the government; he carried two wives away from their husbands, he kept singers, he himself danced and sang in a masterly manner. . . . But would n't you like some vodka? for dinner is already on the table."

A young girl, the one of whom I had caught a glimpse in the garden, entered the room.

" Ah, here 's Olya too! "—remarked Radíloff, slightly turning away his head:—" I beg that you will love and favour her. . . . Well, let 's go to dinner."

We betook ourselves to the dining-room, and seated ourselves. While we were walking from the drawing-room and taking our seats, Feódor Mikhyéitch, whose eyes had begun to beam and his nose to flush a little red from his " reward," sang: " Let the thunder of victory resound! " A special place was set for him in one corner, at

a little table without a cloth. The poor old man could not boast of cleanliness, and therefore he was always kept at a certain distance from the company. He crossed himself, sighed, and began to eat like a shark. The dinner really was far from bad, and, in its quality of a Sunday dinner, did not lack quivering jelly and Spanish breezes (patties). At table, Radíloff, who had served for ten years in an army infantry regiment, and had been in Turkey, began to tell stories. I listened to him attentively, and stealthily watched Olga. She was not very pretty; but the calm and decided expression of her face, her broad, white brow, thick hair, and, in particular, her brown eyes, small but sensible, clear and vivacious, would have struck any one else in my place. She seemed to watch Radíloff's every word; it was not interest but passionate attention which was depicted on her countenance. Radíloff, as to years, might have been her father; he called her "thou," but I instantly divined that she was not his daughter. In the course of the conversation he mentioned his deceased wife—"her sister," he added, indicating Olga. She blushed swiftly, and dropped her eyes. Radíloff paused for a while, and changed the subject. The old lady never uttered a word throughout the dinner, ate hardly anything herself, and did not press anything on me. Her features exhaled a sort of timorous and hopeless expecta-

tion, that sadness of old age which makes the onlooker's heart contract painfully. Toward the end of the dinner Feódor Mikhyéitch undertook to " glorify " [1] the hosts and the guest, but Radíloff, after a glance at me, requested him to hold his tongue; the old man passed his hand across his mouth, blinked his eyes, bowed and sat down again, but this time on the very edge of his chair. After dinner, Radíloff and I betook ourselves to his study.

In people who are powerfully and constantly occupied by a single thought or a single passion, there is perceptible something common to them all, a certain external resemblance in demeanour, however different, nevertheless, may be their qualities, capacities, positions in the world, and

[1] The " Glory " is reckoned among the Christmas songs, or carols, and in its dignified form relates, like many other folk-songs, to the harvest. In this form, extracts or adaptations of it are used in connection with solemn occasions—a fragment of it appeared as part of the miniature decoration of the menu for the present Emperor's coronation banquet, for instance. In another form, it is one of the Twelfth-Night songs among young people, and used like the divining games common to All-Hallowe'en. In this latter form, Ostróvsky has utilized it in his play, " Poverty is not a Sin," Act II, Scene v. The form referred to above is the stately one, and runs somewhat as follows: " Glory to God in heaven, *Glory!*—To our Lord on this earth, *Glory!*—May our Lord (the word used is *gosudár,* which, with a capital, means the Emperor), never grow old, *Glory!*—May his bright robes never be spoiled, *Glory!*—May his good steeds never be worn out, *Glory!*—May his trusty servants never falter, *Glory!*—May the right throughout Russia, *Glory!*—Be fairer than the bright Sun, *Glory!*—May the Tzar's golden treasury, *Glory!*—Be for ever full to the brim, *Glory!*—May the great rivers, *Glory!*—Bear their renown to the sea, *Glory!*—The little streams to the mill, *Glory!*"—Obviously, this can easily be adapted to any circumstances.—TRANSLATOR.

education. The more I observed Radíloff, the more did it seem to me that he belonged to the category of such people. He talked about farming, about the harvest, the mowing, about the war, about the county gossip and the approaching elections,[1] talked without constraint, even with interest, but suddenly he heaved a sigh, dropped into an arm-chair, like a man who is exhausted with heavy toil, and passed his hand over his face. His whole soul, kind and warm, seemed to be permeated through and through, saturated with one feeling. I had already been struck by the fact that I could not discern in him a passion either for eating, or for liquor, or for hunting, or for Kursk nightingales,[2] or for pigeons afflicted with epilepsy, or for Russian literature, or for pacers, or for hussar jackets, or for card-playing or billiards, or for dancing parties, or for paper-mills and beet-sugar factories, or for embellished arbours, or for tea, or for trace-horses trained to the degree of perversion,[3] or for fat coachmen girt directly under the armpits, for those magnificent coachmen, whose eyes—God knows why—twist asquint and

[1] For Marshal of Nobility; for the Government or district.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The nightingales from the Kursk Government are reputed the finest in the country, and have several extra "turns" to their song.—TRANSLATOR.

[3] Meaning—the side horses in the tróïka or three-horse team, trained to gallop spread out like a fan from the central trotter, with heads held down and backwards, so that those in the equipage can see their eyes and nostrils—this in extremes.—TRANSLATOR.

fairly pop out of their heads at every movement of their necks. . . . "What sort of a country squire is he, I'd like to know!" I thought. And in the meantime, he put on no airs of being a gloomy man, and discontented with his lot; on the contrary, he fairly reeked with an atmosphere of unfastidious good-will, cordiality, and almost offensive readiness to be hail-fellow-well-met with every one who came along, without discrimination. It is true that, at the same time, you felt that he could not make friends, really become intimate, with any one whomsoever, and that he could not, not because he had no need of other people in general, but because his whole life had, for the time being, turned inward. As I intently observed Radíloff, I could not possibly imagine him to myself as happy, either now or at any other time. He was not a beauty, either; but in his glance, in his smile, in his whole being there was concealed something extremely attractive,—precisely that: concealed. So, apparently, one would have liked to know him better, to love him. Of course, the country squire, the steppe-dweller, was apparent in him at times; but, notwithstanding, he was a splendid fellow.

We had just begun to discuss the new Marshal of the Nobility for the district, when, all of a sudden, Olga's voice resounded at the door: "Tea is ready." We went to the drawing-room.

Feódor Mikhyéitch was sitting, as before, in his nook between the small window and the door, with his feet modestly tucked up. Radíloff's mother was knitting a stocking. Through the windows open toward the garden there wafted in the chill of autumn and a scent of apples. Olga was busily pouring out tea. I surveyed her now with greater attention than at dinner. She spoke very little, like all country maidens in general, but in her, at least, I did not observe any desire to say something fine, together with a torturing sense of emptiness and impotence; she did not sigh, as though from a superabundance of inexpressible sentiments, did not roll up her eyes, did not smile dreamily and indefinitely. Her gaze was calm and indifferent, like that of a person who is resting after a great happiness, or a great anxiety. Her walk, her movements, were decided and unconstrained. She pleased me greatly.

Radíloff and I got to talking again. I cannot now recall how we arrived at the familiar remark: how frequently the most insignificant things produce a greater impression than the most important.

"Yes,"—said Radíloff:—"I have had that experience myself. I have been married, as you know. Not long . . . . three years; my wife died in childbed. I thought that I should not survive her; I was frightfully afflicted, over-

whelmed, but I could not weep—I went about like a madman. They dressed her, in the usual way, and placed her on the table—here, in this room. The priest came; the chanters came, and they began to sing, to pray, to cense with incense; I made reverences to the earth, but not a tear did I shed. My heart seemed to have turned to stone, and my head also,—and I had grown heavy all over. Thus passed the first day. On the following morning I went to my wife,—it was in summer, the sun illumined her from head to feet, and so brilliantly.—All at once I saw '. . . .'" Here Radíloff involuntarily shuddered. . . " what do you think? One of her eyes was not quite closed, and on that eye a fly was walking. . . . I fell to the floor in a heap, unconscious, and when I recovered my senses, I began to weep, to weep,—I could not stop. . . ."

Radíloff relapsed into silence. I looked at him, then at Olga. . . . I shall never forget the expression of her face as long as I live. The old lady dropped the stocking on her knees, pulled a handkerchief from her reticule, and stealthily wiped away a tear. Feódor Mikhyéitch suddenly rose to his feet, seized his fiddle, and started a song in a hoarse, wild voice. He probably wished to cheer us up; but we all shuddered at his first sound, and Radíloff requested him to be quiet.

" However,"—he went on:—" what has hap-

pened, has happened; the past cannot be recalled, and, after all . . . . everything is for the best in this world, as Voltaire—I think it was—once said," he added hastily.

"Yes,"—I returned:—"of course. Besides, every misfortune may be borne, and there is no situation so bad, but that one can escape from it."

"Do you think so?"—remarked Radíloff.—"Well, perhaps you are right. I remember lying half-dead in the hospital in Turkey: I had putrid fever. Well, our quarters were nothing to brag of—of course, it was war-time,—and we thanked God for even that much! All of a sudden, more patients were brought to us,—where were they to be put? The doctor rushed hither and thither: there was no room. At last he came up to me, and asked the assistant: 'Is he alive?' The man answered: 'He was this morning.' The doctor bent over me, listening: I was breathing. My friend lost patience. 'Well, he has got a stupid sort of nature,'—said he:—'why, the man will die, he will infallibly die, and he keeps creaking on, dragging along; he merely takes up space, and interferes with others.' Well, I thought to myself, thou art in a bad way, Mikhaílo Mikhaílitch. . . . And behold, I got well and am alive at the present moment, as you may see. So, you must be right."

"I am right, in any case,"—I replied:—"even

if you had died, you would have escaped from your evil state."

"Of course, of course,"—he added,—dealing the table a heavy blow with his hand. . . . "All that is required, is to make up one's mind. . . . . What 's the sense of enduring a bad situation? . . . . Why delay, drag matters out? . . ."

Olga rose swiftly and went out into the garden.

"Come, now, Fédya, a dance-tune,"—exclaimed Radíloff.

Fédya leaped to his feet, strode about the room with that peculiar dandified gait wherewith the familiar "goat" treads around the tame bear, and struck up: "When at our gate . . . ."

The rumble of a racing-gig resounded at the entrance, and a few moments later there came into the room an old man of lofty stature, broad-shouldered and heavily-built, freeholder Ovsyánikoff. . . . But Ovsyánikoff is so remarkable and original a person, that, with the reader's permission, we will discuss him in another excerpt. But now, I will merely add, on my account, that on the following day Ermolái and I set off a-hunting as soon as it was light, and from the hunt went home; . . . that a week later, I ran in to see Radíloff, but found neither him nor Olga at home, and two weeks afterward learned that he had suddenly disappeared, abandoned his mother, and gone off somewhere or

other with his sister-in-law. The whole government was in commotion, and gossiping about this occurrence, and only then, at last, did I understand the expression of Olga's face during Radíloff's story. It had not breathed forth compassion alone then: it had also flamed with jealousy.

Before my departure from the country I called on old Mme. Radíloff. I found her in the drawing-room; she was playing "fool" with Feódor Mikhyéitch.

"Have you any news from your son?"—I asked her at last.

The old lady began to weep. I questioned her no further about Radíloff.[1]

[1] Marriage with a sister-in-law is prohibited in the Eastern Catholic Church. Two brothers may not even wed two sisters.—TRANSLATOR.

VI

FREEHOLDER OVSYÁNIKOFF [1]

PICTURE to yourselves, dear readers, a stout, tall man, seventy years of age, with a face somewhat suggestive of that of Krylóff,[2] with a clear and intelligent gaze, beneath overhanging eyebrows: with a stately mien, deliberate speech, slow gait; there is Ovsyánikoff for you. He wore a capacious blue surtout with long sleeves, a lilac silk kerchief round his neck, brightly-polished boots with tassels, and, altogether, resembled a well-to-do merchant. His hands were very handsome, soft and white; in the course of conversation, he frequently fingered a button of his coat. Ovsyánikoff, by his dignity and impassiveness, his intelligence and laziness, his straightforwardness and stubbornness, reminded me of the Russian

[1] The "freeholders" constitute a peculiar intermediate class, neither gentry nor peasants. They are: 1. Settlers who regard themselves of noble lineage, and, in some cases, formerly owned serfs. 2. Descendants of nobles of the court service and of military men who were colonised in the Ukráina (Border-Marches) in the XVIIth century. They are found chiefly in the governments of Tambóff, Vorónezh, and neighbouring governments, once the Border-Marches.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Iván Andréevitch Krylóff (1763–1844), the famous Russian fabulist.—TRANSLATOR.

boyárs of the times anterior to Peter the Great: . . . . the féryaz[1] would have suited his style. He was one of the last survivors of the olden days. All his neighbours respected him extremely, and regarded it as an honour to know him. His brother freeholders all but said their prayers to him, doffed their caps to him from afar, were proud of him. Generally speaking, to this day, we find it difficult to distinguish a freeholder from a peasant: his farming-operations are almost worse than those of a peasant, his calves are forever in the buckwheat fields, his horses are barely alive, his harness is of ropes. Ovsyánikoff was an exception to the general rule, although he was not reputed to be wealthy. He lived alone with his wife, in a snug, neat little house, kept only a small staff of servants, clothed his people in Russian style, and called them labourers. And they really tilled his land. He did not claim to be a nobleman, he did not pretend to be a landed proprietor, he never, as the saying is, "forgot himself," he did not seat himself at the first invitation, and at the entrance of a new visitor he invariably rose from his seat, but with so much dignity, with so much majestic courtesy, that the visitor involuntarily saluted him the more profoundly. Ovsyánikoff held to ancient customs not out of superstition (he had a fairly

[1] An ancient, long-skirted coat, with long sleeves, no collar, and no defined waist-line.—TRANSLATOR.

liberal soul), but from habit. For example, he did not like equipages with springs, because he did not find them comfortable, and drove about either in a racing-gig, or in a small, handsome cart with a leather cushion, and himself held the reins over a good bay trotter. (He kept only bay horses.) The coachman, a rosy-cheeked young fellow, with his hair cut in a bowl-shaped crop, clad in a bluish long coat and a low sheepskin cap, and with a strap for a girdle, sat respectfully by his side. Ovsyánikoff always slept after dinner, went to the bath on Saturdays, read only religious books (on which occasions he pompously set a pair of silver-mounted spectacles astride of his nose), rose and went to bed early. But he shaved off his beard, and wore his hair in foreign fashion. He welcomed visitors with much affection and cordiality, but did not bow to their girdles, did not fuss, did not treat them to all sorts of dried and salted viands.—"Wife!" he would say deliberately, without rising from his seat, and turning his head slightly in her direction:—"Fetch the gentlemen some dainty morsel or other." He regarded it as a sin to sell grain, the gift of God, and in the year 1840, at a time of general famine and frightfully high prices, he distributed his entire store to the neighbouring landed proprietors and peasants; in the following year, they repaid their debt to him in kind, with gratitude. The neigh-

bours frequently resorted to Ovsyánikoff with appeals to arbitrate, to effect reconciliations between them, and almost always submitted to his decree, obeyed his advice. Many, thanks to him, got the boundaries of their land definitely settled. . . . . But after two or three skirmishes with landed proprietresses, he announced that he declined any sort of intervention between persons of the female sex. He could not endure haste, agitated precipitation, women's chatter and "fussiness." Once it happened that his house caught fire. A labourer rushed precipitately to him, yelling: "Fire! Fire!"—"Well, what art thou yelling for?" said Ovsyánikoff, calmly:—"Give me my hat and staff."—He was fond of breaking in his horses for himself. One day, a mettlesome Bitiúk [1] dashed headlong down-hill with him, toward a precipice. "Come, that will do, that will do, thou green colt,—thou wilt kill thyself," Ovsyánikoff remarked good-naturedly to him, and a moment later flew over the precipice, along with his racing-drozhky, the small lad who was sitting behind, and the horse. Luckily, the sand lay in heaps at the bottom of the ravine. No one was injured, but the Bitiúk dislocated his leg.—"Well, there, thou seest,"—went on Ovsyánikoff in a calm voice, as he rose

[1] "Bitiúks"—horses from Bitiúk; a special race, which were reared in the Government of Vorónezh, near the well-known "Khryenovóy" (the former stud-farm of Count Orlóff).—TRANSLATOR.

from the ground:—"I told thee so."—And he had found himself a wife to match him. Tatyána Ilínitchna Ovsyánikoff was a woman of lofty stature, dignified and taciturn, with a cinnamon-brown silk kerchief forever bound about her head. She exhaled a chilly atmosphere, although not only did no one accuse her of being severe, but, on the contrary, many poor wretches called her "dear little mother" and "benefactress." Regular features, large, dark eyes, thin lips, still bore witness to her formerly renowned beauty. Ovsyánikoff had no children.

I made his acquaintance, as the reader already is aware, at Radíloff's, and a couple of days later I went to see him. I found him at home. He was sitting in a large leathern arm-chair, and reading the Tchetyá-Mináya.[1] A grey cat was purring on his shoulder. He welcomed me, according to his wont, caressingly and in stately wise. We entered into conversation.

"But pray tell me truly, Luká Petróvitch,"—I said, among other things;—"Things were better formerly, in your time, were n't they?"

"Some things really were better, I will tell you,"—returned Ovsyánikoff:—"We lived more peacefully; there was greater ease, really. . . . But, nevertheless, things are better now; and they will be better still for our children, God willing."

[1] "The Martyrology," or Lives of the Saints.—Translator.

"But I expected, Luká Petróvitch, that you would laud the olden days to me."

"No, I have no special cause to laud the olden times. Here, now, to give an instance, you are a landed proprietor at the present day, just such a landed proprietor as your deceased grandfather was before you, but you will never have the power he had! and you are not the same sort of a man, either. Other gentlemen oppress us nowadays; but, evidently, that cannot be dispensed with. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. No, I no longer see what I used to wonder at in my youth."

"And what was that, for example?"

"Why, take this now, for instance, I will refer to your grandfather once more. He was an overbearing man! he wronged folks like me. Now, perhaps you know—and how can you help knowing about your land?—that wedge which runs from Tchúlýgino to Malínino; . . . . . You have it planted to oats now. . . . Well, that's ours, you know,—every bit of it ours. Your grandfather took it away from us; he rode out on horseback, pointed it out with his hand, said: "My property,"—and took possession of it. My father, now dead (the kingdom of heaven be his!), was a just man, but he was also a hot-tempered man, and he would not put up with that,—and who does like to lose his property? —and he appealed to the court of law. One

judge gave it to him, but the others did not agree, —they were afraid. So they reported to your grandfather to the effect that 'Piótr Ovsyánikoff is making a complaint against you; he says you have been pleased to deprive him of his land.' . . . . Your grandfather immediately sent his huntsman Bausch to us, with a squad. . . . So they took my father and carried him off to your hereditary estate. I was a little lad then, and ran after them, barefooted. What next? . . . . They took him to your house, and flogged him in front of the windows. And your grandfather stood on the balcony, and looked on; and your grandmother sat at the window and looked on also. My father shouts: 'Dear little mother, Márya Vasílievna, intercede! Do you, at least, spare me!' But all she did was to keep rising up, now and then, and taking a look. So then they made my father promise to retire from the land, and they ordered him to return thanks, to boot, that they had let him go alive. And so it has remained in your possession. Just go and ask your own peasants: 'What is that land called?' The land of the oaken cudgel [1] it is called, because it was taken away by an oaken cudgel. And that is why it is impossible for us, the petty people, very greatly to regret the ancient order of things."

I did not know what reply to make to Ovsyánikoff, and did not dare to look him in the face.

[1] *Dubovshstchina,* in Russian.—TRANSLATOR.

"And then take another of our neighbours, who made his nest among us in those days,—Kómoff, Stepán Niktopoliónitch. He tormented my father to death: if not with biting, with scratching. He was a drunken fellow, and fond of standing treat, and when he had taken a glass too much, he would say in French, 'C'est bon,' and carry on so, that it was enough to make one want to take the holy pictures out of the room, with shame! He would send and invite all the neighbours to favour him with their company. He had tróïkas standing ready harnessed; and if you did n't come, he 'd drop down on you himself. . . . And such a strange man as he was! When he was sober, he did not lie; but as soon as he began to drink he would begin to relate that in Peter[1] he had three houses on the Fontánka: one red, with one chimney; another yellow, with two chimneys; and the third blue, with no chimney,—and three sons (but he was not married): one in the infantry, one in the cavalry, and the third a gentleman of leisure. . . . And, he said, that in each of his houses dwelt one of his sons; that admirals came to visit the eldest, generals to visit the second, and nothing but Englishmen to visit the third! Well, and he would rise to his feet and say: 'To the health of my eldest son, he 's the most respectful!'—and begin to weep. And woe be

[1] Petersburg.—Translator.

to the man who undertook to refuse! 'I 'll shoot him,'—he would say: 'and I won't allow him to be buried!' . . . . Or he would spring up and begin to shout: 'Dance, ye people of God, for your own amusement and my consolation!' Well, you 'd dance, though you might die for it, you 'd dance. He utterly wore out his serf girls. They used to sing in chorus all night long until the morning, and the one who raised her voice the highest got a reward. And if they began to tire, he would drop his head on his hands, and begin to grieve: 'Okh, an orphaned orphan am I! they are abandoning me, the dear little doves!' Then the stablemen would immediately administer a little encouragement to the girls. He took a fancy to my father: how could one help that? He almost drove my father into his grave, you know; and he really would have driven him into it, had he not died himself, thank the Lord: he tumbled headlong from the pigeon-house, in a drunken fit. . . . So that 's the sort of nice neighbours we used to have!"

"How times have changed!"—I remarked.

"Yes, yes,"—assented Ovsyánikoff. . . . "Well, and there 's this to be said: in the olden days, the nobles really lived more sumptuously. Not to mention the grandees: I had a chance to admire them in Moscow. 'T is said they have now died out there also."

"Have you been in Moscow?"

"Yes, long ago, very long ago. I 'm now in my seventy-third year, and I travelled to Moscow when I was sixteen."

Ovsyánikoff heaved a sigh.

"And whom did you see there?"

"Why, I saw a great many grandees—and everybody saw them: they lived openly, gloriously, and amazingly. Only, not one of them equalled Count Alexyéi Grigórievitch Orlóff-Tchesménsky.[1] I used to see Alexyéi Grigórievitch frequently: my uncle served him as major-domo. The Count deigned to live at the Kalúga Gate, on Sháblovka street. There was a grandee for you! It is impossible to imagine to one's self such an imposing carriage, such gracious courtesy, and impossible to describe it. What was not his stature alone worth, his strength, his glance! Until you knew him, you would n't enter his house—you 'd be afraid, regularly intimidated; but if you did go in, you felt as though the sun were warming you, and you 'd get cheerful all through. He admitted every one to his presence, and was fond of everything. At races he drove himself, and would race with anybody; and he would never overtake them all at once, he would n't hurt their feelings, he would n't cut

[1] One of Katherine II's favourites, who won his title of "Tchesménsky" by his victory over the Turkish fleet at Tchesmé in 1769. A silver dinner-plate which he twisted into a roll with his fingers is preserved in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.—TRANSLATOR.

them off short, but probably he would pass them just at the end; and he was so caressing,—he would comfort his adversary, praise his horse. He kept first-class tumbler pigeons. He used to come out into the courtyard, seat himself in an arm-chair, and order them to set the pigeons flying; and all around, on the roofs, stood men with guns, to ward off the hawks. A big silver vase of water was placed at the Count's feet; and he would look into the water and watch the pigeons. The poor and the needy lived on his bread by the hundred . . . and how much money he gave away! But when he got angry, it was like the thunder roaring. A great alarm, but nothing to cry about: the first you knew,—he would be smiling. He would give a feast,—and furnish drink for all Moscow! . . . . and what a clever man he was! he conquered the Turk, you know. He was fond of wrestling, too; they brought strong men to him from Túla, from Khárkoff, from Tambóff, from everywhere. If he overcame a man, he would reward him; but if any one conquered him, he would load that man with gifts, and kiss him on the lips. . . . And during my stay in Moscow, he organised such a hare-hunt as never was seen in Russia; he invited all the sportsmen in the whole empire to be his guests, and appointed a day three months ahead. Well, and so they assembled. They brought dogs, huntsmen,—well, an army arrived,

a regular army! First they feasted, as was proper, and then they set off for the barrier. An innumerable throng of people had collected. . . . . And what do you think? . . . . Why, your grandfather's dog outran them all."

"Was n't it Milovídka?"[1] I asked.

"Yes, Milovídka. . . . So, the Count began to entreat him: 'Sell me thy dog,' says he: 'ask what price thou wilt.'—'No, Count,' says he, 'I 'm not a merchant: I don't sell useless rags, and for the sake of honour, I 'm even willing to surrender my wife, only not Milovídka. . . . . I 'll surrender myself as a prisoner first.' And Alexyéi Grigórievitch praised him: 'I like that,' says he. And he drove your grandfather back in his own carriage; and when Milovídka died, they buried her in the garden with music,—they buried the bitch, and placed a stone with an inscription on it over the bitch's grave."

"Why, so Alexyéi Grigórievitch really never did offend any one,"—I remarked.

"Yes, he was always like that: the man who is sailing in shallow water himself is the one who picks quarrels."

"And what sort of a man was that Bausch?"—I asked, after a brief pause.

"How is it that you have heard about Milovídka, and not about Bausch? . . . . He was the head huntsman and whipper-in of your

[1] From *míliy*, pretty, and *vid*, aspect.—TRANSLATOR.

grandfather. Your grandfather loved him no less than he did Milovídka. He was a desperado, and no matter what your grandfather ordered, he executed it in the twinkling of an eye, even if it was to hurl himself on a knife. . . . . And when he halloed on the hounds, it was as though a groan filled the forest. And all of a sudden, he would get a fit of obstinacy, and alight from his horse, and lie down. . . . And just as soon as the hounds ceased to hear his voice, it was all over! They would abandon a hot scent, they would n't continue the chase, on any terms whatsoever. I-ikh, how angry your grandfather used to get! 'I 'll turn thee wrong side out, thou antichrist! I 'll pull thy heels out through thy throat, thou soul-ruiner!' And it would end in his sending to inquire what he wanted, why he was not uttering the halloo! And in such cases, Bausch would generally demand liquor, would drink it off, get up, and begin to whoop again magnificently."

"You seem to be fond of hunting also, Luká Petróvitch?"

"I would have liked it . . . . that 's a fact, but not now: now my day is over,—but in my youth . . . . and, you know, it 's awkward, because of my rank. It is n't proper for the like of me to try to imitate the nobles. That 's the truth of it: one man of our class—a drunkard and incapable—used to tag on to the gentry . . . .

but what pleasure is there in that! You only put yourself to shame. They gave him a miserable, stumbling horse; and they kept picking off his cap and flinging it on the ground; they would strike him with their hunting-whips, as though he were a horse; and he would laugh all the while himself, and make the others laugh. No, I tell you: the smaller the rank, the more rigidly must you behave, otherwise, the first thing you know, you will be disgracing yourself."

"Yes,"—pursued Ovsyánikoff, with a sigh,—"much water has flowed past since I have lived in the world: other days have arrived. Especially in the nobles do I perceive a great change. The petty gentry have all either entered the government service, or else they don't stay still in one place; and as for the greater estate-owners, they are unrecognisable. I have had a good look at them, at the big men, in connection with the delimitation of boundaries. And I must tell you, my heart rejoices as I look at them: they are affable, polite. Only this is what surprises me: they have all studied the sciences, they talk so fluently that your soul is moved within you, but they don't understand real business, they are n't even awake to their own advantage: why, a serf, their manager, can drive them whithersoever he pleases, like a slave. Here now, for example, perhaps you are acquainted with Korolyóff, Alexander Vladímirovitch,—

is n't he a regular noble? A beauty, rich, educated at the ' 'niversity,' I believe, and has been abroad, talks fluently, modestly, shakes hands with all of us. You do know him? . . . . well, then hearken to me. Last week, we assembled at Beryózovka, on the invitation of the arbitrator, Nikifór Ilitch. And the arbitrator, Nikifór Ilitch, says to us: ' Gentlemen, we must fix the boundaries; 't is a shame that our section has lagged behind all the rest; let 's get to work.' So we set to work. Discussions and disputes began, as is usual; our attorney began to put on airs. But Porfíry Ovtchínnikoff was the first to make a row. . . . And on what ground does the man make a row? He does n't own an inch of land himself: he manages it on behalf of his brother. He shouts: ' No! you can't cheat me! no, you 've got hold of the wrong man! hand over the plans, give me the surveyor, the seller of Christ, hand him over to me! '—' But what is your claim? '—' So you think you 've caught a fool, forsooth! have n't I just announced my demands to you? . . . no, you just hand over those plans,—so there now! ' And he is thwacking the plans with his hand the while. He dealt a deadly insult to Márfa Dmítrievna. She shrieks: ' How dare you sully my reputation? '—' I,'—says he, ' would n't want my brown mare to have your reputation.' They administered some madeira to him by force. They got him quieted down,

—and others began to make a rumpus. Alexánder Vladímiritch Korolyóff, my dear little dove, sits in a corner, nibbling at the knob of his cane, and merely shaking his head. I felt ashamed, 't was more than I could endure, I wanted to flee from the room. ' What does the man think of us? ' I said to myself. And behold, my Alexánder Vladímiritch rises, shows that he wishes to speak. The arbitrator begins to fuss, says: ' Gentlemen, gentlemen, Alexánder Vladímiritch wants to speak.' And one can't help praising the nobles: all of them immediately became silent. So Alexánder Vladímiritch began and said: 'We appear to have forgotten the object for which we have come together; although the delimitation of boundaries is, indisputably, advantageous for the proprietors, yet in reality, it is established for what purpose?—it is for the purpose of making things easier for the peasant, so that he can toil and discharge his obligations the more conveniently; but as things stand now, he does not know even which land is his, and not infrequently has to travel five versts to till the soil, —and he cannot be held to account.' Then Alexánder Vladímiritch said that it was a sin for a landed proprietor not to look out for the welfare of the peasants; that, in short, the sensible way of viewing the matter was, that their advantage and our advantage are identical: if they are well off, we are well off, if they are in evil plight, so

are we; . . . . and that, consequently, 't is a sin and foolish to fail of agreement because of trifles. . . . And he went on, and on. . . . And how he did talk! It fairly gripped your soul. . . . And all the nobles hung their heads, I myself was on the very verge of melting into tears. 'T is a fact, that there are no such speeches in the ancient books. . . . And what came of it? He himself would n't surrender four desyatínas of moss-bog, and would n't sell it either. Says he: 'I 'll have my men drain that swamp, and I 'll set up—I 'll set up a cloth-mill on it, with improvements. I,' says he, 'have already selected that location: I have my own calculations on that score. . . And if it had only been just! But the simple facts in the case were,—that Alexánder Vladímiritch's neighbour, Antón Karásikoff, had been too stingy to bribe Alexánder Vladímiritch's manager with a hundred rubles. So we parted without having accomplished any business. And Alexánder Vladímiritch considers himself to be in the right up to the present time, and keeps babbling idly about a cloth-mill, but he does n't set about draining the bog."

"And how does he manage his estate?"

"He is all the time introducing new-fangled notions. The peasants don't approve of them,—but there 's no use in paying any attention to them. Alexánder Vladímiritch is acting rightly."

"How so, Luká Petróvitch? I thought you clung to the old ways."

"I—am quite a different matter. I 'm not a noble, you see, nor a landed proprietor. What does my farming amount to? . . . . And I don't know any different way, either. I try to act according to justice and the law,—and that 's all a man can do. The young gentlemen don't like the former ways: I applaud them. . .'T is time to use their brains. Only, there 's this sad point about it: the young gentlemen are awfully subtle. They treat the peasants as though they were dolls: turn them this way and that, break them and cast them aside. And the manager, a serf, or the steward, of German parentage, gets the peasants into his claws again. And if one of the young gentlemen would only set an example, would demonstrate: 'This is the way things should be managed!' . . . . But what is to be the end of it? Is it possible that I shall die without having beheld the new order of things? . . . Why is it? the old has died out, and the new does not prosper!"

I did not know how to answer Ovsyánikoff. He cast a glance about, moved closer to me, and continued, in an undertone:

"Have you heard about Vasíly Nikoláitch Liubozvónoff?"

"No, I have not."

"Please to explain to me what sort of marvels

are these. I am utterly at a loss to understand. Why, his own peasants told the tale, but I will not take their speeches into account. He 's a young man, you know, who came into his inheritance not long ago, at his mother's death. Well, and he comes to his patrimonial estate. The peasants have assembled to have a look at their master. Vasíly Nikoláitch comes out to them. The peasants look, and—amazing to relate!—the master is wearing velveteen trousers as though he were a coachman, and has donned short boots with fancy tops; he has put on a red shirt, and a coachman's kaftan also; he has let his beard grow, and has such a queer little cap on his head, and his face is queer too,—not precisely drunk, but as though he were out of his wits. 'Good day, my lads!'[1] says he: 'Good luck to you!'[2] The peasants make him a reverence to the girdle, —but in silence: they had got frightened, you know. And he himself seemed to be timid. He began to make a speech:

"'I 'm a Russian,' says he, 'and you are Russians too; I love everything Russian. . . . . I have a Russian soul,' says he, 'and my blood is Russian also.' . . . . And all of a sudden, as though it were a command: 'Come now, my

[1] Literally: "Health, my lads!" The official greeting of an officer to his soldiers, to which there is an official reply.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Literally: "God be your helper." The customary greeting to any peasant one may meet.—TRANSLATOR.

children, sing a Russian folk-song!' The peasants' hamstrings began to tremble; they turned utterly stupid. One bold lad tried to strike up a tune, but immediately squatted down on the ground, hid himself behind the rest. . . . . And there was cause for amazement: there used to be among us landed proprietors, desperate fellows, arrant rakes, to tell the truth: they dressed almost like coachmen, and danced themselves,[1] played on the guitar, sang and drank with the worthless house-serfs, feasted with the peasants; but this Vasíly Nikoláitch, you see, is just like a handsome girl: he 's always reading books, or writing, when he is n't declaiming verses aloud,—he never converses with any one, he holds himself aloof, he 's forever strolling in the garden, as though he were bored or sad. The former manager was thoroughly intimidated, at first; before the arrival of Vasíly Nikoláitch, he made the rounds of all the peasants' houses, made obeisance to everybody,—evidently, the cat knew whose meat he had eaten,—that he was in fault! And the peasants cherished hopes; they thought: 'Fiddlesticks, brother!—thou wilt soon be called to account, dear little dove; thou wilt soon be weeping thy fill, thou extortioner!' . . . . But it turned out instead,—how shall I announce it to you!

[1] The view taken of dancing, in olden days, in Russia was—that it was derogatory to the dignity of gentlefolks; something to be performed for them by their serfs, or paid inferiors.—TRANSLATOR.

The Lord Himself could n't make head or tail of what happened! Vasíly Nikoláitch summoned him to his presence, and says to him, flushing scarlet himself the while, and breathing fast—so, you know: 'Be just, don't oppress any one on my estate,—dost thou hear?' And from that day forth, he has never ordered him to appear before him! He lives on his own paternal estate, as though he were a stranger. Well, and the overseer breathed freely and enjoyed himself; but the peasants don't dare to approach Vasíly Nikoláitch: they 're afraid. And, you see, here 's another thing which is deserving of surprise: the master bows to them, and looks courteous,—but their bellies fairly ache with fright. Now, what sort of queer goings-on do you say these are, dear little father? . . . . Either I have become stupid, or grown old,—but I don't understand."

I answered Ovsyánikoff, that, in all probability, Mr. Liubozvónoff was ill.

"Ill, indeed! He 's thicker through than I am, and his face, God be with him, is very big around, in spite of his youth. . . . However, the Lord knows!" (And Ovsyánikoff heaved a deep sigh.)

"Well, setting aside the nobles,"—I began: —"What have you to say to me about the freeholders, Luká Petróvitch?"

"No, you must excuse me from that,"—he

said hastily:—" really . . . I would tell you . . . but what 's the use!" (Ovsyánikoff waved the subject aside with his hand.) "We 'd better drink tea. . . . Peasants, downright peasants; nevertheless, to tell the truth, what are we to do?"

He fell silent. Tea was served. Tatyána Ilínitchna rose from her place and seated herself nearer to us. During the course of the evening, she had noiselessly left the room several times, and as noiselessly returned. Silence reigned in the room. Ovsyánikoff drank cup after cup, in a slow and stately way.

" Mítya was here to-day,"—remarked Tatyána Ilínitchna in an undertone.

Ovsyánikoff frowned.

" What does he want?"

" He came to ask forgiveness."

Ovsyánikoff shook his head.

" Now, just look at that,"—he continued, addressing me:—" what ought a man to do about his relatives? 'T is impossible to renounce them. . . Here now, God has rewarded me with a nephew. He 's a young fellow with brains, a dashing young fellow, there's no disputing that; he studied well, only, I can't expect to get any good of him. . . He was in the government service—he abandoned the service: you see, he had no chance of promotion. . . . Was he a noble? And even nobles don't get to be generals instantaneously. And so, now he is living in idleness.

. . . And that might pass,—but he has turned into a pettifogger! He composes petitions for the peasants, writes reports, teaches the rural policemen, shows up the surveyors for what they are, lounges about the dram-shops, picks up acquaintance at the posting-houses with petty burghers from the town, and with yard-porters. Is n't a catastrophe imminent? And the captain and commissary of the rural police have already threatened him. But he, luckily, knows how to jest, he makes them laugh, and then, afterward, he 'll stir up a mess for them. . . . Come now, is n't he sitting in thy chamber?" . . he added, turning to his wife:—" I know thy ways: thou art such a tender-hearted creature,—thou showest him thy protection."

Tatyána Ilínitchna dropped her eyes and blushed.

" Come, that 's how it is,"—went on Ovsyánikoff. . . . " Okh, thou spoiler! Well, order him to come in,—so be it, for the sake of our dear guest, I will forgive the stupid fellow. . . Come, order him in, order him in. . . . ."

Tatyána Ilínitchna went to the door and called out: " Mítya! "

Mítya, a young fellow of eight and twenty years, tall, finely built, and curly-haired, entered the room, and, catching sight of me, halted on the threshold. His clothing was of foreign cut, but the unnatural size of the puffs on the shoulders

were sufficient proof in themselves that it had been made not only by a Russian tailor, but by a Russian of the Russians.

"Well, come on, come on,"—said the old man: "of what art thou ashamed? Thank thy aunt: thou art forgiven. . . Here, dear little father, let me introduce him,"—he went on, pointing to Mítya:—"he 's my own blood nephew, but I shall never be able to get on with him. The end of the world has come!" (We bowed to each other.) "Come, speak up, what sort of a scrape hast thou got into yonder? What are they complaining about thee for! Tell us?"

Mítya, evidently, did not wish to explain and defend himself before me.

"Afterward, uncle,"—he muttered.

"No, not afterward, but now,"—went on the old man. . . . "I know that thou art ashamed before the noble squire: so much the better, punish thyself. Pray, be so good as to speak out. . . . We are listening."

"I have no reason to feel ashamed,"—began Mítya, with vivacity, and shook his head.—"Pray judge for yourself, dear uncle. The Ryeshetílovo freeholders come to me and say: 'Defend us, brother.'—'What do you want?'—'Why, this: our grain warehouses are in accurate order,—that is to say, nothing could be better; all at once, an official comes in: "I have orders to inspect the warehouses." He inspected them, and

says: "Your warehouses are in disorder, there are important omissions, I am bound to report to the authorities."—"Why, wherein consist the omissions?"—"I know what they are," says he. . . . . We came together, and decided to thank the official in proper fashion,—but old Prokhóritch interfered; says he: "In that way, you 'll only whet his appetite for more. Well, really now, have n't we any rights?"—So we heeded the old man, but the official flew into a rage, and made a complaint, wrote a report."—'But were your warehouses really in proper order?' I asked.—'As God sees me, they were in order and we have the legal quantity of grain. . . .' 'Well,' said I, 'then there 's no cause for you to fear,' and I wrote the document for them. . . . . And no one yet knows in whose favour it will be decided. . . . And as for people having complained to you about me in this connection,—that is easy to understand: everybody looks out for number one."

"Everybody else,—only, evidently, not thou," —said the old man in an undertone. . . . . "And what sort of intrigues hast thou been engaging in, with the Shutolómovo peasants?"

"How do you know about that?"

"I do know.

"I was in the right there also,—please judge for yourself again. Bezpándin, a neighbour of the Shutolómovo peasants, ploughed four desya-

tínas of land. 'The land is mine,' said he. The Shutolómovo men are on quit-rent, their squire has gone abroad,—judge for yourself,—who is there to stand up for them? But the land is theirs, indisputably, has belonged to the serfs since time immemorial. So they come to me, and say: 'Write a petition.' And I wrote it. But Bezpándin heard about it, and began to make threats: 'I 'll pull that Mítka's shoulder-blades out of their sockets,' says he, 'if I don't tear his head clean off his shoulders. . . .' Let 's see how he 'll tear it off: it 's whole up to the present moment."

"Well, don't boast; thy head 's of no use to thee,"—remarked the old man:—"thou art a downright crazy man!"

"But, uncle, was n't it you yourself who said to me . . . . ."

"I know, I know what thou art going to say to me,"—Ovsyánikoff interrupted him;—"exactly so: a man should live according to justice, and is bound to aid his neighbour. There are times when he should not even spare himself. . . But dost thou always act in that manner? Don't folks lead thee to the dram-shop? don't they treat thee to drinks? don't they pay thee respect? 'Dmítry Alexyéitch, dear little father,' say they, 'help us, and we will show thee our gratitude,'—and thrust a ruble or a blue bank-note into thy hand under their coat-tails? Hey? Is n't that

what happens? Tell me, is n't that the way of it?"

"In that respect, I really am guilty,"—replied Mítya, dropping his eyes,—"but I take nothing from the poor, and don't act against my conscience."

"Thou dost not take now, but when thou findest thyself in evil state,—thou wilt take. Thou dost not act against thy conscience . . . . ekh, shame on thee! Thou always upholdest saints, that means!—But hast thou forgotten Bórka[1] Perekhódoff? . . . Who bustled about on his behalf? Who lent him protection? Hey?"

"Perekhódoff suffered through his own fault, 't is true." . . .

"He spent the government money. . . . A nice joke that!"

"But just consider, dear uncle: poverty, a family. . . . ."

"Poverty, poverty. . . He 's a drinking man, a hard drinker; . . . that 's what he is!"

"He took to drink from misery,"—remarked Mítya, lowering his voice.

"From misery! Well, thou mightest have helped him, if thy heart is so warm, but thou mightest have refrained from sitting in the dramshop with a drunken man thyself. That he talks eloquently,—much of a rarity that is, forsooth!"

"He 's the kindest man possible. . . . ."

"Everybody 's kind, according to thee. . . . .

[1] The disrespectful diminutive of Borís.—Translator.

Anyhow,"—continued Ovsyánikoff, addressing his wife:—" they have sent him off . . . . well, yonder, thou knowest whither." . . . .

Tatyána Ilínitchna nodded her head.

" Where hast thou disappeared to these days? "—began the old man again.

" I have been in the town."

" I suppose thou hast been playing billiards all the while, and guzzling tea, and twanging on the guitar, and slipping stealthily through the public offices, concocting petitions in back rooms, and showing thyself off in great style with the young merchants? That 's so, is n't it? . . . . Tell me! "

" Probably it is,"—said Mítya, with a smile. . . " Akh, yes! I came near forgetting: Fúntikoff, Antón Parfénitch, invites you to dine with him on Sunday."

" I won't go to that big-bellied fellow's house. He 'll serve us with fish worth a hundred rubles, and prepared with tainted butter. I 'll have nothing whatever to do with him! "

" By the way, I met Fedósya Mikhaílovna."

" What Fedósya is that? "

" Why, the one who belongs to Squire Garpéntchenko, you know, who bought Mikúlino at *suction*.[1] Fedósya is from Mikúlino. She lives in Moscow as a seamstress, and paid quit-rent, one hundred and eighty-two rubles a year. . . . And she knows her business: she received fine

[1] Auction.—Translator.

orders in Moscow. But now, Garpéntchenko has ordered her back, and is keeping her here idle, and assigns her no duties. She is ready to purchase her freedom, and has told her master so, but he announces no decision. You are acquainted with Garpéntchenko, uncle,—so could n't you speak just a little word to him? And Fedósya will pay a good ransom."

"Not out of thy money, is it? Well, well, all right, all right, I 'll speak to him. Only, I don't know,"—went on the old man, with a displeased countenance:—"that Garpéntchenko,[1] Lord forgive him, is an extortioner: he buys in notes, lends at usurious interest, acquires estates under the hammer. . . . . And who brought him to our parts? Okh, how I detest these newcomers! It won't be a short matter to get any satisfaction from him;—however, we shall see."

"Use your efforts, uncle."

"Good! I will. Only, see here now, mind what I say! Come, come, don't defend thyself. . . . God bless thee, God bless thee! . . . Only, hereafter, look out, or, by heaven, Mítya, 't will be the worse for thee,—thou wilt come to grief, by heaven, thou wilt! . . . I can't carry thee on my shoulders forever. . . . I 'm not an influential man myself. Now go, with God's blessing."

[1] Evidently, from his name, ending in *enko,* the man was a Little Russian, whose compatriots bear in Russia the reputation of being as "canny" as the Scotch in England, or as "sharp" as the Yankees in America.—Translator.

Mítya left the room. Tatyána Ilínitchna followed him.

"Give him some tea, thou child-spoiler,"—shouted Ovsyánikoff after her. . . . . "He 's not a stupid young fellow," he went on:—"and he has a kind soul, only, I 'm afraid for him. . . . But pardon me, for having taken up so much of your time with trifles."

The door into the anteroom opened. There entered a short, greyish-haired man, in a velvet coat.

"Ah, Franz Iványitch!"—exclaimed Ovsyánikoff:—"good morning, what mercies does God show to you?"

Permit me, amiable reader, to make you acquainted with this gentleman also.

Franz Iványitch Lejeune, my neighbour and a landed proprietor of Orel, attained to the honourable rank of a Russian noble in manner not entirely usual. He was born in Orléans, of French parents, and set off in company with Napoleon to conquer Russia, in the capacity of a drummer. At first, everything went as though on oiled wheels, and our Frenchman entered Moscow with head erect. But on the return journey poor M—r. Lejeune, half frozen and without his drum, fell into the hands of the Smolénsk peasants. The Smolénsk peasants locked him up for the night in an empty fulling-mill, and on the following morning led him to a

hole in the ice, close to the dam, and began to entreat the drummer "de la grrrrande armée," to do them a favour, that is, to dive under the ice. M—r. Lejeune could not assent to their proposal, and, in return, he began to try to prevail upon the Smolénsk peasants, in the French dialect, to set him free to return to Orléans. "There, messieurs," said he, "dwells my mother, *une tendre mère.*" But the peasants, probably in consequence of their ignorance as to the geographical situation of Orléans, continued to propose to him a trip under the ice, with the downward current of the winding little river Gnilotyórka, and had already begun to encourage him with gentle thrusts in the vertebræ of his neck and back, when, all of a sudden, to the indescribable joy of Lejeune, the sound of a small bell rang out, and on to the dam drove a huge sledge with a gay-hued rug on the exaggeratedly elevated foot-board behind, and drawn by a team of three roan-horses. In the sledge sat a fat, red-faced landed proprietor in a wolf-skin coat.

"What are you doing there?"—he asked the peasants.

"Why, we 're drowning a Frenchman, dear little father."

"Ah!"—returned the squire, indifferently, and turned away.

"Monsieur! Monsieur!"—shrieked the poor man.

"Ah, ah!"—remarked the wolf-skin coat, reprovingly:—"he has come to Russia with the twelve nations,[1] has burned Moscow,—the accursed one!—has torn the cross from Iván Velíky,[2] and now 't is 'Musieu, Musieu!' and now he has tucked his tail between his legs! The thief ought to suffer torture. . . . . Drive on, Fílka!"

The horses started.

"Ah, stop, though!"—added the squire. . . . "hey, thou, Musieu, dost understand music?"

"*Sauvez-moi, sauvez-moi, mon bon monsieur!*"—repeated Lejeune.

"Did any one ever see such a race! and not one of them knows a single word of Russian! *Musique, musique, savez musique vous?*—on piano *jouez savez?*"

Lejeune understood, at last, what the landed proprietor was driving at, and nodded his head affirmatively.

"*Oui, monsieur, oui, oui, je suis musicien; je joue tous les instruments possibles! Oui, monsieur . . . . . Sauvez-moi, monsieur!*"

"Well, thou hast had a narrow escape,"—retorted the squire. . . "Release him, my lads: here 's a twenty-kopék piece for you, for liquor."

[1] In the grand Te Deum which is celebrated always on Christmas Day, in commemoration of the delivery of Russia, in 1812, the French and their allies are called "the Gauls and the Twelve Nations"—the word employed for nation being the one which is derived from the same root as the word heathen.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The great belfry of the Kremlin.—TRANSLATOR.

" Thanks, dear little father, thanks. Please take him."

They seated Lejeune in the sledge. He was choking with joy, he wept, trembled, made obeisance, thanked the squire, the coachman, the peasants. He wore a green under-jacket with pink ribbons, and the weather was gloriously cold. The squire cast a silent glance at his blue and benumbed limbs, wrapped the unhappy man in his fur cloak, and carried him home. The servants flocked together. They hastily warmed, fed, and clothed the Frenchman. The squire conducted him to his daughters.

" Here, children,"—he said to them:—" I 've found a teacher for you. You have kept pestering me, ' Teach us music and the French dialect ': so here 's a Frenchman for you, and he plays on the piano too. . . . Come on, Musieu,"—he continued, pointing to the miserable little piano, which he had purchased five years previously from a Jew, who, however, peddled Cologne water:—" show us your skill: *jouez!* "

Lejeune, with sinking heart, seated himself on the stool: he had never laid finger on a piano since he was born.

" Come, *jouez, jouez!* "—repeated the squire.

In desperation, the poor fellow banged on the keys as though they had been a drum, and played at haphazard. . . . . " I really thought," he said, as he told the story afterward, " that my res-

cuer would seize me by the collar, and fling me out of the house." But, to the intense amazement of the involuntary improvisatore, the landed proprietor, after a while, slapped him approvingly on the shoulder. "Good, good,"—said he, "I see that thou knowest how; go now, and rest."

A couple of weeks later, Lejeune was transferred from this landed proprietor to another, a wealthy and cultivated man, became a favourite with him through his cheerful and gentle disposition, married his pupil, entered the government service, married his daughter to landed proprietor Lobysányeff of the Orel government, a retired dragoon and poet, and himself removed his residence to Orel.

And it was this same Lejeune, or, as he was now called, Franz Iványitch, who entered the room of Ovsyánikoff, with whom he was on friendly terms. . . . .

But, perhaps, the reader is already tired of sitting with me at Freeholder Ovsyánikoff's, and therefore I will preserve an eloquent silence.

VII

LGOFF [1]

"LET 's go to Lgoff,"—said Ermolái, who is already known to the reader, to me one day;—"we can shoot a lot of ducks there."

Although a wild duck offers nothing particularly attractive for a genuine sportsman, still, in the temporary absence of other game (it was the beginning of September; the woodcock had not yet arrived, and I had got tired of tramping over the fields after partridges), I gave heed to my huntsman, and set off for Lgoff.

Lgoff is a large village on the steppe, with an extremely ancient stone church of one cupola, and two mills, on the marshy little river Rosóta. Five versts from Lgoff this little stream becomes a broad pond, overgrown along the edges and here and there in the middle with dense reeds. On this pond, in the bays or stagnant spots amid the reeds, there bred and dwelt an innumerable mass of ducks of all possible varieties: widgeon, semi-widgeon, pintails, teals, mergansers, and so

[1] The soft sign between the *l* and the *g* renders the former soft: so that this is pronounced almost as though spelled L[i]goff.—TRANSLATOR.

forth. Small coveys were constantly flying to and fro, hovering over the water, and a shot started up such clouds of them, that the sportsman involuntarily clapped one hand to his cap and emitted a prolonged: "Phe-e-ew!"—Ermolái and I started to walk along the edge of the pond, but, in the first place, the duck, which is a wary bird, does not take up its stand on the shore itself; in the second place, even if any laggard and inexperienced teal had succumbed to our shots and lost its life, our dogs would not have been able to retrieve it in the dense reed-growth: in spite of the most noble self-sacrifice, they could neither have swum, nor walked on the bottom, and would have cut their precious noses against the sharp edges of the reeds all in vain.

"No,"—said Ermolái at last:—"this won't do: we must get a boat. . . . Let's return to Lgoff."

We set off. We had taken only a few steps when from behind a thick willow, a decidedly wretched setter ran forth to meet us, and in its wake a man made his appearance—a man of medium stature, in a blue, very threadbare coat, a yellowish waistcoat, trousers of the tint known as *gris-de-laine* or *bleu-d'amour,* hastily tucked into boots full of holes, with a red kerchief on his neck, and a single-barrelled gun on his shoulder. While our dogs, with the Chinese ceremonial habitual to their race, sniffed at the unfa-

miliar individual, who was evidently intimidated, tucked his tail between his legs, dropped his ears, and briskly wriggled all over without bending his knees and showing his teeth the while,—the stranger came up to us, and made a very polite obeisance. Judging by his appearance, he was about five and twenty years of age; his long, light chestnut hair, strongly impregnated with kvas, stuck out in motionless little pig-tails,—his small brown eyes blinked amiably,—his whole face, bound up with a black kerchief, as though he were suffering from the toothache, beamed voluptuously.

"Allow me to introduce myself,"—he began, in a soft, insinuating voice:—"I 'm the huntsman here, Vladímir. . . . . On hearing of your arrival, and learning that you had deigned to direct your steps to the shores of our pond, I have decided, if it will not be disagreeable to you, to offer you my services."

Huntsman Vladímir talked precisely like a young provincial actor who plays the parts of the leading lovers. I accepted his proposal, and before we reached Lgoff I had succeeded in learning his history. He was a house-serf who had been set at liberty; in his tender youth, he had studied music, then had served as valet, knew how to read and write, had read a few little books, so far as I could make out, and while now existing, as many do exist in Russia, without a far-

thing in cash, without any fixed occupation, subsisted on something pretty near akin to heavenly manna. He expressed himself with remarkable elegance and obviously took a foppish pride in his manners; he must have been a frightful dangler after the women, too, and, in all probability, enjoyed successes in that line: Russian maidens love eloquence. Among other things, he directed my attention to the fact, that he sometimes called on the neighbouring landed proprietors, and went to town to visit, and played preference, and was acquainted with people in the county capital. He smiled in a masterly manner, and with extreme diversity; the modest, reserved smile which played over his lips when he was listening to the remarks of other people, was particularly becoming to him. He would listen to you, and agree with you perfectly, but nevertheless he did not lose the sense of his own dignity, and seemed to be desirous of giving you to understand that, on occasion, he might put forth an opinion of his own. Ermolái, being a man of not too much education, and not in the least "subtle," undertook to address him as "thou." You ought to have seen the grin with which Vladímir addressed him as "you-sir." . . . .

"Why are you wearing that kerchief-bandage?"—I asked him.—"Have you the tooth-ache?"

"No, sir,"—he replied:—"it is, rather, the

noxious result of imprudence. I had a friend, a fine man, sir, not a huntsman at all, as that sometimes happens, sir. Well, sir, one day he says to me: 'My dear friend, take me a-hunting: I feel curious to know what diversion there is in that.' Naturally, I did not wish to refuse my comrade; I furnished him with a gun, sir, for my part, and took him a-hunting, sir. Well, sir, we hunted our fill, as was proper; and, at last, we took it into our heads to rest, sir. I sat down under a tree; but he, on his side, on the contrary, began to play pranks with his gun, sir, and took aim at me. I requested him to stop it, but, in his inexperience, he did not heed me, sir. The gun went off, and I lost my chin and the forefinger of my right hand. . . . . ."

We reached Lgoff. But Vladímir and Ermolái had decided that it was impossible to hunt without a boat.

"Sutchók has a barge-plank punt,"[1]—remarked Vladímir:—"but I don't know where he has hidden it. I must run to him."

"To whom?" I asked.

"Why, a man lives here whose nickname is Sutchók" (The Twig).

Vladímir, with Ermolái, set off in quest of The Twig. I told them that I would wait for them at the church. As I inspected the tombstones in the churchyard, I hit upon a blackened, quadrangular urn, with the following inscrip-

[1] A flat boat knocked together from old barge planks.

tions: on one side, in French characters: " Ci-gît Théophile-Henri, Vicomte de Blangy; " on another: " Beneath this stone is interred the body of Count Blangy, French subject; born 1737, died 1799, at the age of 62; " on the third side: " Peace to his ashes; " on the fourth side:

Beneath this stone lies a French emigrant:
He had birth distinguished and talent.
By the massacre of wife and family distressed,
He abandoned his fatherland by the tyrant oppressed;
The shores of the Russian land having attained,
In his old age a hospitable roof-tree he gained;
The children he taught, the parents consoled. . . . .
Here the Almighty Judge has given rest to his soul.

The arrival of Ermolái, Vladímir, and the man with the strange nickname, The Twig, interrupted my meditations.

Barefooted, tattered, and dishevelled, The Twig seemed, from his appearance, to be a retired house-serf, about sixty years of age.

" Hast thou a boat? "—I asked.

" I have,"—he replied, in a dull and cracked voice:—" but it 's very bad."

" How so? "

" It 's coming apart; and the plugs have fallen out of the holes." [1]

" A great misfortune that," put in Ermolái: " but we can stuff in tow."

[1] See note on page 21.—Translator.

"Of course, that is possible,"—assented The Twig.

"But who art thou?"

"The squire's fisherman."

"How canst thou be a fisherman, and have thy boat in such disrepair?"

"Why, there are no fish in our river."

"Fish don't like rusty swamp-water,"—remarked my huntsman, pompously.

"Well,"—I said to Ermoláï:—"go, get some tow, and repair the boat for us, and be quick about it."

Ermoláï departed.

"Well, I suppose we shall go to the bottom, anyway?"—I said to Vladímir.

"God is merciful,"—he replied. "In any case, we are bound to suppose that the pond is not deep."

"No, it is n't deep,"—remarked The Twig, who talked in a curious manner, as though half asleep:—"and there is slime and grass on the bottom, and it 's all overgrown with grass. However, there are pit-holes too."

"But if the grass is so strong,"—remarked Vladímir:—"it will be impossible to row."

"Why, but who does row a punt? It must be shoved with a pole; I have a pole yonder,—or a shovel will do."

"A shovel is clumsy, I don't suppose one could touch bottom with it in some places,"—said Vladímir.

" That 's true, it is awkward."

I sat down on a grave to wait for Ermolái. Vladímir went off a little way, from a sense of propriety, and sat down also. The Twig continued to stand in the same spot, with drooping head, and hands folded behind his back, out of old habit.

" Tell me, please,"—I began:—" hast thou been a fisherman here long? "

" This is the seventh year,"—he replied, with a start.

" And what was thy previous occupation? "

" Formerly I was a coachman."

" Who discharged thee from the post of coachman? "

" Why, the new mistress."

" What mistress? "

" Why, the one who has bought us. You don't know her: Alyóna [Eléna] Timofyéevna, such a fat woman . . . . and not young."

" What made her take it into her head to promote thee to be the fisherman? "

" God knows. . She came to us from her estate, from Tambóff, ordered all the house-serfs to assemble, and came out to us. First of all, we went and kissed her hand, and she made no objection: she was not angry. . . And then she began to question us, one after the other: what did each do, what duties did he perform? My turn came; so she asks: ' What hast thou been? ' I say: ' A coachman! '—' A coachman? Well, a

pretty sort of coachman thou art; just look at thyself: a coachman, forsooth! 'T is not fit that thou shouldst be a coachman: thou shalt be my fisherman, and thou must shave off thy beard. When I come hither, thou art to supply fish for my table, dost hear?' . . . So from that time forth, I have been reckoned a fisherman. And it is my business, you see, to keep the pond in order. . . . . But how is it to be kept in order?"

"To whom did you formerly belong?"

"Why, to Sergyéi Sergyéitch Pékhteroff. We came to him through inheritance. But he did not own us long,—six years in all. And I served as coachman to him . . . but not in town —there he had others, but in the country."

"And wert thou always a coachman, from thy youth up?"

"A coachman, indeed! I became a coachman under Sergyéi Sergyéitch, but before that I was the cook,—but not in town, but thus, in the country."

"And whose cook wert thou?"

"Why, my former master's, Afanásy Nefyóditch, uncle to Sergyéi Sergyéitch. He bought Lgoff, Afanásy Nefyóditch bought it, and Sergyéi Sergyéitch inherited the estate."

"From whom did he buy it?"

"Why, from Tatyána Vasílievna!"

"From what Tatyána Vasílievna?"

"Why, the one yonder, who died year before

last, near Bolkhóff . . . . I mean to say, near Karátchevo,—a spinster. . . . . And she was never married. Don't you know her? We came to her from her father, from Vasíly Semyónitch. She owned us a pretty long time . . . . about twenty years."

"Well, and so thou wert her cook?"

"At first, in fact, I was a cook, and then I became kofischenk."

"What?"

"Kofischenk."

"What sort of an employment is that?"

"Why, I don't know, dear little father. I was attached to the butler's pantry, and my name was Antón, and not Kuzmá. Those were the mistress's orders."

"Is thy real name Kuzmá?"

"Yes."

"And wert thou kofischenk all the time?"

"No, not all the time: I was also an actor."

"Is it possible?"

"Of course I was. . . . I played in the keatre. Our mistress set up a keatre in her house."

"What parts didst thou play?"

"What were you pleased to ask, sir?"

"What didst thou do in the theatre?"

"Why, don't you know? Well, they would take and dress me up; and I would walk about decked out, or stand, or sit, as the case might be.

They would tell me: 'This is what thou must say'—and I would say it. Once I represented a blind man. . . They put a pea under each of my eyelids. . . So they did!"

"And after that, what wert thou?"

"After that, I became a cook again."

"Why did they degrade thee to the position of cook?"

"Why, my brother ran away."

"Well, and what wert thou with the father of thy first mistress?"

"Why, I discharged various duties: first I was a page, a falet, a shoemaker, and also a whipper-in."

"A whipper-in? . . . . And didst thou ride to hounds?"

"I did, and injured myself: I fell from my horse, and hurt the horse. Our old master was very severe; he ordered me to be flogged, and to be apprenticed to a shoemaker in Moscow."

"What dost thou mean by apprenticeship? I don't suppose thou wert a whipper-in while thou wert a child?"

"I was over twenty."

"And what sort of instruction could there be at twenty?"

"Of course, if the master ordered, there was no help. But, luckily, he died soon after,—and they brought me back to the village."

" But when didst thou learn the art of cookery? "

The Twig raised his thin, sallow face a little, and laughed aloud.

" Why, does one learn that?—But even the peasant women can cook! "

" Well," said I:—" thou hast seen sights in thy day, Kuzmá! And what dost thou do now, as fisherman, if there are no fish on thy mistress's estate? "

" Why, dear little father, I have nothing to complain of. And thank God that I was made the fisherman. For the mistress ordered just such another old fellow as me—Andréi Pupýr—to the paper-mill as water-carrier. ' 'T is sinful,' says she, ' to eat the bread of idleness.' . . . . And Pupýr was counting on favour: his first cousin's son is clerk in the mistress's office, and he had promised to report about him to the mistress, to remind her of him. Much he reminded her! . . . And Pupýr, before my very eyes, bowed down to his cousin-nephew's feet."

" Hast thou any family? Hast thou been married? "

" No, dear little father. The late Tatyána Vasílievna—the kingdom of heaven be hers!—permitted no one to marry. God forbid! She used to say: ' I live unwedded, as you see. What self-indulgence! who needs it? ' "

"On what dost thou live now? Dost thou receive wages?"

"Wages, indeed, dear little father! . . . They give me my victuals—and thanks to Thee, O Lord, for that same! I 'm well satisfied. May God prolong our mistress's life!"

Ermoláï returned.

"The boat is repaired,"—he said surlily.—"Go fetch thy pole—thou!" The Twig ran for his pole. During the whole time of my conversation with the poor old man, Vladímir the huntsman had stared at him with a scornful smile.

"A stupid man, sir,"—he said, when the latter went away:—"an entirely uneducated man, a peasant, sir, nothing more, sir. He cannot be called a house-serf, sir . . . he was just bragging all the time, sir. . . . Just judge for yourself, sir, how could he be an actor, sir? You have deigned to bother yourself unnecessarily, you have condescended to chat with him, sir!"

A quarter of an hour later, we were seated in the punt. (We had left the dog in the cottage, under the oversight of the coachman Iegudiíl.) We were not very comfortable, but hunters are not extremely fastidious folks. The Twig stood at the blunt-pointed stern, and "shoved." Vladímir and I sat on the cross-seats of the boat. Ermoláï placed himself in front, at the very bow. In spite of the tow, water speedily made its appearance under our feet. Fortunately, the

weather was calm, and the pond was as quiet as though asleep.

We floated on rather slowly. The old man with difficulty pulled his long pole out of the ooze, all wound about with the green threads of the submarine sedges; the thick, circular pads of the marsh lilies also impeded the progress of our boat. At last we reached the reeds, and the fun began. The ducks rose noisily, " tore themselves " from the pond, frightened by our unexpected appearance in their domain, shots followed them thick and fast, and it was diverting to see those bob-tailed birds turn somersaults in the air and flop down heavily on the water. As a matter of course, we did not retrieve all the ducks we shot: the slightly wounded dived; some, killed outright, fell into such dense clumps of reeds that even Ermolái's carroty-hued little eyes could not detect them; but, nevertheless, by dinner-time our boat was filled to overflowing with game.

Vladímir, to the great amazement of Ermolái, proved to be very far from a good shot, and after each unsuccessful discharge felt surprised, inspected and blew into his gun, was puzzled, and, at last, explained to us the reason why he had missed his aim. Ermolái shot, as usual, with triumphant success; I, quite badly, according to my wont. The Twig gazed at us with the eyes of a man who has been in the service of the gen-

try from his youth up, shouted now and then, "Yonder, yonder is another duck!"—and kept incessantly scratching his back—not with his hands, but with his shoulders, which he set in motion. The weather was magnificent: round, white clouds floated high and softly over our heads, and were clearly reflected in the water; the reeds whispered around us; the pond, in spots, glittered like steel in the sunlight. We were preparing to return to the village, when, all of a sudden, a decidedly unpleasant accident happened to us.

We had long since noticed that the water had been gradually but constantly gathering in our punt. Vladímir was commissioned to bail it out, by means of a dipper, which my provident huntsman had abstracted, in case of need, from a peasant woman who was not watching. Things went on as they should, until Vladímir forgot his duty. But toward the end of the hunt, as though by way of farewell, the ducks began to rise in such flocks, that we hardly had time to load our guns. In the smoke of the firing, we paid no attention to the condition of our punt,—and suddenly, at a violent motion on the part of Ermolái (he was trying to secure a duck which had been killed, and was bearing his full weight against the gunwale), our decrepit vessel careened, filled with water, and triumphantly went to the bottom,—fortunately, at a spot where the water was not

deep. We cried out, but it was already too late: a moment later, we were standing up to our necks in the water, surrounded by the floating carcasses of the dead ducks. I cannot now recall without laughter the frightened, pallid countenances of my companions (probably, my own face was not distinguished by its high colour at the time, either); but at that moment, I must confess, it never entered my head to laugh. Each of us held his gun over his head, and The Twig, probably owing to his habit of imitating his superiors, elevated his pole on high also. Ermolái was the first to break the silence.

"Whew, damn it!"—he muttered, spitting into the water: "here 's a pretty mess! And it 's all thy fault, thou old devil!"—he added angrily, turning to The Twig:—"what sort of a boat dost thou call that?"

"Forgive me!"—faltered the old man.

"Yes, and thou art a nice one too,"—went on my huntsman, turning his head in the direction of Vladímir:—"why wert not thou on the look-out? why didst thou not bail? thou, thou, thou . . . ."

But Vladímir was already past retorting; he was trembling like a leaf, his teeth were chattering, and he was smiling in a wholly senseless way. What had become of his fine language, his sense of delicate propriety, and his own dignity!

The accursed punt rocked weakly under our feet. . . . At the moment of our ship-wreck, the water had seemed to us extremely cold, but we soon got used to it. When the first alarm subsided, I glanced about me: all around, at a distance of ten paces from us, grew reeds; far away, over their tops, the shore was visible. "We 're in a bad plight!" I thought.

"What are we to do?"—I asked Ermolái.

"Why, here now, let 's see; we can't spend the night here,"—he replied.—"Here now, hold my gun,"—he said to Vladímir.

Vladímir submissively obeyed.

"I 'll go and search out a ford,"—went on Ermolái, with confidence, as though in every pond there must, infallibly, exist a ford,—took the pole from The Twig, and set off in the direction of the shore, cautiously probing the bottom.

"But canst thou swim?"—I asked him.

"No, I can't,"—rang out his voice, from behind the reeds.

"Well, then he 'll drown,"—indifferently remarked The Twig, who had at first been frightened, not at the danger, but at our wrath, and now, with perfect composure, merely drew a long breath from time to time, and, apparently, felt no imperative necessity to alter his situation.

"And he 'll perish quite uselessly, sir,"—added Vladímir, plaintively.

Ermolái did not return for more than an hour.

That hour seemed an eternity to us. At first we exchanged shouts with him very assiduously; then he began to answer our calls more infrequently, and at last he fell silent altogether. In the village the bells began to ring for vespers. We did not talk with each other, we even tried not to look at each other. The ducks hovered over our heads; some prepared to alight beside us, but suddenly soared aloft, " like a shot," as the saying is, and flew quacking away. We began to grow numb. The Twig blinked his eyes, as though he were inclined to be sleepy.

At last, to our indescribable joy, Ermolái returned.

" Well, what now? "

" I have been to the shore; I have found a ford."

" Let us go."

We wanted to set off on the instant; but first he drew a rope from his pocket under water, tied the dead ducks by their legs, took both ends in his teeth, and strode on in front; Vladímir followed him, I followed Vladímir, and The Twig closed the procession. It was about two hundred paces to the shore. Ermolái walked onward boldly, and without a halt (so well had he taken note of the road), only calling out, from time to time: " More to the left,—there 's a sink-hole on the right! " or: " To the right,—there on the left you 'll stick fast." . . . . At

times the water reached our throats, and twice the poor Twig, being lower of stature than the rest of us, choked and emitted bubbles.—" Come, come, come! "—shouted Ermoláï menacingly at him,—and The Twig scrambled, floundered about with his feet, hopped, and, somehow or other, reached a shallower spot; but, even in extremity, he could not bring himself to clutch the tail of my coat. Worn out, dirty, soaked, we reached the shore at last.

Two hours later, we were all sitting, dried so far as that was possible, in a large hay-shed, and preparing to sup. Iegudiíl, extremely slow to start, disinclined to move, sagacious and sleepy, stood at the gate, and assiduously regaled The Twig with snuff. (I have noticed that coachmen in Russia speedily strike up friendship.) The Twig snuffed it up furiously to the point of nausea: spat, coughed, and, to all appearances, experienced great satisfaction. Vladímir assumed a languid air, lolled his head on one side, and said little. The dogs wagged their tails with exaggerated briskness, in anticipation of oatmeal porridge; the horses were stamping and neighing under the shed. . . . . The sun had set; its last rays dispersed in crimson streaks; little golden clouds spread over the sky, growing ever thinner and thinner, like a fleece washed and combed. . . . . Songs resounded in the village.

VIII

BYÉZHIN MEADOW

It was a magnificent July day, one of those days which come only when the weather has been fair for a long time. From the very earliest dawn the sky is clear; the morning glow does not flame like a conflagration: it pours itself forth in a gentle flush. The sun, not fiery, not red-hot, as in the season of sultry drought, not of a dull crimson, as before a tempest, but bright, and agreeably radiant, glides up peacefully under a long, narrow cloudlet, beams freshly, and plunges into its lilac mist. The thin upper edges of the outstretched cloudlet begin to flash like darting serpents; their gleam resembles the gleam of hammered silver. . . . But now the sportive rays have burst forth once more,—and the mighty luminary rises merrily and majestically, as though flying. In the neighbourhood of midday, a multitude of round, high-hanging clouds make their appearance, of a golden-grey hue, with tender white rims. Like islands, scattered upon a river which has overflowed to an endless extent, and streams around them in profoundly-transparent branches of level azure, they

hardly stir from their places. Further away, toward the horizon, they move to meet each other, press close upon one another, and there is no azure to be seen between them, but they themselves are as blue as the sky: they are all permeated, through and through, with light and warmth. The colour of the horizon, a light, pale lilac, does not undergo any change all day long, and is the same all the way round; nowhere does it grow darker, nowhere is a thunder-storm brewing; here and there, perhaps, bluish streaks run downward from above, or a barely perceptible shower sprinkles down. Toward evening, these clouds vanish; the last of them, blackish and undefined in form, like smoke, lie in rosy, curling wreaths over against the setting sun; at the place where it has gone down as tranquilly as it rose in the sky, a scarlet aureole stands, for a little while, above the darkening earth, and, flickering softly, like a carefully carried taper, the evening star kindles in it. On such days, the colours are all softened, bright but not gaudy; over everything rests the imprint of a certain touching gentleness. On such days the heat is sometimes very great; sometimes, even, it is "stewing hot" on the slopes of the fields; but the breeze chases away, disperses the accumulated sultriness, circling wind-gusts—an unfailing sign of settled weather—wander in tall white columns of dust along the roads across the tilled land. The dry,

pure air is redolent of wormwood, crushed rye, buckwheat; even an hour before nightfall, you will feel no dampness. This is the sort of weather which the farmer craves for harvesting his grain.

On precisely such a day, I was once hunting partridges in the Tchyórnoye district of the Túla government. I had found and shot quite a lot of game; my well-filled game-bag was cutting pitilessly into my shoulder; but the evening glow had already died out, and in the air, which was still light, although no longer illuminated by the rays of the setting sun, the chilly shadows were beginning to thicken and spread abroad when, at last, I decided to return home. With swift strides I traversed a long "square" of second-growth bushes, climbed a hill, and, instead of the familiar level stretch with its oak copse, which I had expected to see on my right, and the low-browed white church in the distance, I beheld an entirely different set of places, with which I was not acquainted. At my feet stretched a narrow vale; directly opposite, a dense grove of aspen trees rose in a steep wall. I halted in bewilderment, and glanced about me. . . . . "Oho!" I thought: "why, I have lost my way completely: I have kept too much to the right," and, amazed at my mistake, I briskly descended the hill. I was immediately beset by a disagreeable, motionless dampness, as though I had entered a cellar:

the thick, tall grass on the floor of the vale, all wet through, gleamed like a smooth, white table-cloth; somehow, one felt uneasy about stepping on it. I scrambled up the opposite slope as alertly as possible, keeping to the left, along the aspen grove. Bats were already flitting above its slumbering crests, mysteriously circling and quivering against the confusedly-clear sky; a belated hawk flew past smartly and directly upward, hurrying to its nest. "Now, as soon as I turn yonder corner," I thought to myself, "I shall immediately strike the road;—but I have made a loop of a verst!"

At last, I reached the corner of the forest, but there was no road: some low-growing, unfelled bushes spread out broadly in front of me, and beyond them, far, far away, a stretch of waste land was visible. Again I came to a standstill. "What 's the meaning of this? . . . Why, where am I?"—I began to recall how and where I had roamed during the course of the day. . . "Eh! why, these are the Parákhinsko bushes!" I exclaimed at last: "that 's it exactly! that must be the Sindyéevo copse yonder. . . But how in the world did I get here? So far? . . . . 'T is strange! Now I must keep to the right again."

I went to the right, through the bushes. In the meantime night was drawing on, and growing like a thunder-cloud; it seemed as though, along with the nocturnal exhalations, the darkness rose

from all directions, and even streamed down from on high. I hit upon an unbeaten, overgrown path; I advanced along it, attentively gazing ahead. Everything around was swiftly growing black and silent,—only the quails uttered a call from time to time. A small night bird, darting inaudibly and low on its soft wings, almost came into collision with me, and dived aside in affright. I emerged upon the edge of the bush-growth, and wended my way along the boundary strip of sward between two fields. Already I could make out distant objects only with difficulty: the field gleamed dimly white around me; beyond it, moving nearer with every passing moment in huge masses, surged up the grim gloom. My footsteps resounded dully in the chilly air. The sky, which had paled, began to turn blue again,—but it was the nocturnal blue now. Tiny stars began to twinkle, to stir in it.

That which I had been on the point of taking for a grove, turned out to be a dark, round hillock. "But where am I, then?" I repeated, once more, aloud, halted for the third time, and stared inquiringly at my English, yellow-spotted hound, Dianka, positively the cleverest of all four-footed creatures. But the cleverest of quadrupeds only wagged her tail, blinked her weary eyes dolefully, and gave me no practical advice. I felt ashamed in her presence, and rushed desperately onward, as though I had sud-

denly divined whither I ought to go, skirted the hillock, and found myself in a shallow depression, tilled all around. A strange feeling immediately took possession of me. This hollow had almost the form of a regular kettle, with sloping sides; on its bottom several large, white boulders reared themselves on end,—they seemed to have crawled down there to hold a secret conference, and the place was so deaf and dumb, the sky hung over it so flatly, so dejectedly, that my heart contracted within me. Some sort of a small, wild animal was whining weakly and pitifully among the boulders. I made haste to retreat behind the hillock. Up to this moment, I had not yet lost hope of finding my way home; but now I became definitively convinced that I was completely lost, and without making the slightest further effort to recognise my surroundings, which were almost entirely drowned in the mist, I walked straight ahead, guided by the stars, at random. . . . I continued to walk thus for about half an hour, with difficulty putting one foot before the other. It seemed to me that, never since I was born, had I been in such desert places: not a single light twinkled anywhere, not a sound was audible. One sloping hill succeeded another, fields stretched out after fields in endless succession, bushes seemed fairly to spring out of the earth in front of my very nose. I kept walking on and on, and was already

making ready to lie down somewhere until the morning, when, suddenly, I found myself on the brink of a frightful abyss.

I hastily drew back my foot, which was thrust forward, and athwart the barely penetrable gloom of night I descried, far down beneath me, a vast ravine. A broad river swept around it in a semicircle which swerved away from me; steely gleams of water, flashing forth rarely and dimly, designated its course. The hill on which I found myself descended in an almost perpendicular precipice; its huge outlines stood out, darkling, against the bluish aërial waste, and directly beneath me, in the angle formed by the precipice and the level plain, beside the river, which, at that point, stood like a dark, motionless mirror, beneath the very steep face of the hill, burned and smoked, side by side, two fires. Around them people were swarming, shadows were flickering, the front half of a small, curly head was at times brilliantly illuminated. ...

I recognised, at last, whither I had come. This meadow is renowned in our vicinity under the name of the Byézhin Meadow. . . . . But there was no possibility of getting home, especially by night; my legs were giving way beneath me with weariness. I made up my mind to approach the fires, and, in the company of the people, whom I took for drovers, to await the dawn. I made a successful descent, but before I

could release from my hand the last bough I had clutched, two large, white, shaggy dogs flew at me, barking viciously. Ringing childish voices resounded around the fires; two or three little boys rose hastily from the ground. They ran toward me, called off the dogs, who had been particularly surprised by the appearance of my Dianka, and I approached them.

I had made a mistake in taking the persons who were sitting round those fires for drovers. They were simply peasant children from the neighbouring village, who were herding the horses. In our parts, during the hot summer weather, the horses are driven out to graze in the fields at night: by day, the flies and gadflies would give them no peace. It is a great treat for the peasant lads to drive the herd out at eventide and drive them home at dawn. Seated, capless, and in old half-coats, on the most restive nags, they dash on with merry whoops and shouts, with dangling arms and legs, bouncing high aloft, with ringing laughter. The light dust rises in a column and blows along the road; far away, the vigorous trampling of hoofs is borne on the air, the horses race onward, pricking up their ears; in front of all, flirting its tail, and incessantly changing foot, gallops a shaggy reddish-yellow beast, with burdock burs in its tangled mane.

I told the little lads that I had lost my way, and sat down with them. They asked me

whence I had come, fell silent, drew aside. We chatted a little. I lay down under a gnawed bush, and began to look about me. It was a wonderful picture; around the fires quivered, and, as it were, flickered, resting against the darkness, a round, reddish reflection; the flame, flashing up now and then, cast swift gleams beyond the limit of that circle; a thin tongue of light would lick the bare boughs of the scrub-willows and instantly vanish;—long, sharp-pointed shadows, breaking forth, for a moment, in their turn, rushed up to the very fires: the gloom wrestled with the light. Sometimes, when the flame burned more feebly, and the circle of light contracted, a horse's head would suddenly thrust itself forward out of the invading gloom,—a brown horse, with a sinuous white mark on the forehead, or all white,—and gaze attentively and dully at us, briskly chewing a long tuft of grass the while, and, lowering again, immediately disappear. All that was audible was, that it continued to chew and snort. From the illuminated place, it was difficult to discern what was going on in the darkness, and, consequently, everything near at hand seemed enveloped in an almost black curtain; but further away, toward the horizon, hills and forests could be dimly descried, in long splashes. The dark, pure sky stood solemnly and boundlessly high above us, with all its mysterious majesty. The breast felt sweet oppression as it

inhaled that peculiar, fresh and enervating fragrance—the fragrance of a Russian summer night. Hardly a sound was audible round about. . . . Only now and then, in the near-by river, a large fish would splash with sudden sonorousness, and the reeds upon the banks would rustle faintly, barely rocked by a truant wave. . . . The fires alone crackled softly.

The little boys sat around them; there, also, sat the two dogs, who would have liked to devour me. For a long time, they could not reconcile themselves to my presence, and, sleepily screwing up their eyes, and casting sidelong glances at the fire, they growled, now and then, with the consciousness of their own dignity; first they growled, and then whined faintly, as though they regretted the impossibility of fulfilling their desire. There were five lads in all: Fédya, Pavlúsha, Iliúsha, Kóstya, and Ványa. (I learned their names from their conversation, and intend to introduce them at once to the reader.)

You would have said that the first, the oldest of them all, Fédya, was fourteen. He was a graceful lad, with handsome, delicate, and rather small features, curly fair hair, light eyes, and a constant, half-merry, half-abstracted smile. He belonged, by all the tokens, to a rich family, and went out thus into the fields, not through necessity, but because he wished it, for amusement. He wore a gay print shirt with a yellow border;

a small, new peasant's long-coat, hanging from his shoulders, the sleeves unused, hardly held in place on his narrow shoulders; from his sky-blue girdle hung a small comb. His boots, with narrow leg-pieces, were really his boots—not his father's. The second lad, Pavlúsha, had tangled, black hair, grey eyes, broad cheek-bones, a pale, pockmarked face, a large, but regular mouth; his whole head was huge as a beer-kettle, as the expression is, his body stubby, uncouth. He was a homely little fellow,—there 's no denying that! —but, nevertheless, he pleased me: his gaze was very sensible and direct, and power resounded in his voice. His garments were nothing to boast of: they consisted of a plain hemp-cloth shirt and patched trousers. The face of the third, Iliúsha, was rather insignificant; hook-nosed, long, mole-eyed, it expressed a sort of stupid, sickly anxiety; his tightly compressed lips did not move, his knitted brows did not unbend,—he seemed to be always screening his eyes from the fire. His yellow, almost white hair stuck out in pointed tufts from beneath a low-crowned, felt cap, which he was incessantly pulling down over his ears with both hands. He wore new linden-bark slippers and leg-cloths; a thick cord, wound thrice around his body, carefully confined his neat, black coat. He and Pavlúsha were, apparently, not over twelve years of age. The fourth, Kóstya, a little lad of ten, excited my curiosity

by his thoughtful and melancholy gaze. His whole face was small, thin, freckled, pointed below, like that of a squirrel; his lips were hardly discernible; but his large, black eyes, shining with a liquid gleam, produced a strange impression: they seemed to want to express something for which the tongue—his tongue, at all events—had no words. He was short of stature, of fragile build, and dressed quite poorly. At first, I came near not noticing the last one, Ványa: he was lying on the ground, peaceably curled up under an angular rug, and only now and then did he thrust out from beneath it his curly chestnut head. This boy was, at most, seven years of age.

So I lay there under a bush, apart, and surveyed the little lads. A small kettle hung over one of the fires: in it they were boiling "'taties." Pavlúsha was watching it, and, kneeling, thrust a chip into the frothing water. Fédya was lying propped on his elbow, with the tails of his coat spread apart. Iliúsha was sitting beside Kóstya, and also screwing up his eyes intently. Kóstya had dropped his head a little, and was gazing off somewhere into the distance. Ványa did not stir under his rug. I pretended to be asleep. Gradually, the boys began to talk again.

At first they prattled about one thing and another, about the toils of the morrow, about the horses; but, all of a sudden, Fédya turned to

Iliúsha and, as though renewing an interrupted conversation, asked him:

"Well, and what wert thou saying—hast thou seen the domovóy?" [1]

"No, I have not seen him, and it is n't possible to see him,"—replied Iliúsha, in a hoarse, weak voice, whose sound precisely matched the expression of his face. "I heard him. . . . . And I was n't the only one."

"And whereabouts on your premises does he haunt?"—inquired Pavlúsha.

"In the old stuff-chest room." [2]

"But do you go to the mill?"

"Of course we do. My brother Avdiúshka and I are plater-boys."

"See there, now—you are mill-hands!" . . . .

"Well, and how didst thou come to hear him?"—asked Fédya.

"Why, this way. It happened that brother Avdiúshka and I, along with Feódor Mikhyéevsky and the squint-eyed Iváshka, and another Iváshka, who is from the Red Hills, and still another Iváshka Sukhorúkoff, and other boys also; there were ten of us lads in all,—the whole gang, that is to say; well, and it happened that we had to pass the night in the stuff-chest room,—that is to say, it did n't happen so, but Nazároff, the

[1] House-sprite, like the banshee.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The building, in paper-mills, where the paper is bailed out of the stuff-chests. It is close to the dam, under the wheel.

overseer, forbade us to go home: says he: 'What 's the good,' says he, 'of you boys trudging home; there 's a lot of work for to-morrow, so don't you go home, my lads.' And so we stayed, and all lay down together, and Avdiúshka says, 'Well, boys, and what if the domovóy should come?' . . . . And before he, Avdyéi that is, had finished speaking, some one suddenly walked across over our heads; but we were lying down-stairs, and he was walking up-stairs, by the wheel. We hear him walking, and the boards fairly bend under him, and crack; now he has passed over our heads; the water suddenly begins to roar and roar against the wheel; the wheel begins to bang and bang, and to turn; but the sluice-gate is shut. We wonder:—who can have raised it, so that the water comes through? But the wheel went on turning and turning, and then stopped. Then that person went to the door up-stairs again, and began to descend the stairs, and came down as though he were in no hurry; the steps fairly groaned beneath him. . . . . Well, the person came to our door, waited, waited,—and suddenly the door flew wide open. We started up in terror, we looked—nothing! . . . . All of a sudden, behold, the mould at one of the stuff-chests began to move, rose up, tipped, and floated, floated like that, through the air, as though some one were rinsing with it, and then went back to its place. Then, at another chest,

the hook was taken from the nail, and put back on the nail again; then some one seemed to go to the door, and suddenly began to cough and hawk, like some sort of sheep, and so noisily. . . . . We all tumbled together in a heap, and crawled under one another. . . . . How scared we were that time!"

"You don't say so!"—remarked Pável.—"What made him cough?"

"I don't know; the dampness, perhaps."

All relapsed into silence.

"Well,"—inquired Fédya:—"are the 'taties done?"

Pavlúsha felt of them.

"No, they 're still raw. . . . . Whew, what a splash,"—he added, turning his face in the direction of the river:—"it must be a pike . . . . and yonder is a shooting star."

"See here, fellows, I 'll tell you something,"—began Kóstya, in a thin little voice:—"Listen to what daddy told me the other day."

"Come on, we 're listening,"—said Fédya, with a patronising mien.

"Of course, you know Gavrílo, the village carpenter?"

"Well, yes; we do."

"But do you know why he is always such a melancholy man: always silent, you know? This is why he is so melancholy: Once on a time, fellows, says my daddy, he went to the forest for

nuts. So he went to the forest for nuts, and got lost; God knows where he came out. So he walked and walked, fellows,—but no! he could n't find the road! and night was already at hand. So he sat down under a tree; 'I 'll just wait until morning,' says he to himself,—so he sat down, and fell into a doze. And while he was sleeping, he suddenly heard some one calling him. He looks—no one. Again he fell asleep, —again came the call. Again he looks and looks around: and in front of him, on a bough, sits a water-nymph; she rocks to and fro, and calls him to her, while she herself is dying with laughter. And she laughs so! . . . .And the moon was shining strongly,—so strongly, clearly is the moon shining, that everything is visible, my boys. So she calls him, and sits there on the bough, all brilliant, and white, just like a roach or a gudgeon,—or a carp, also, is whitish and silvery like that. . . . . Gavrílo the carpenter fairly fell back in a swoon, fellows; but she, you know, shrieked with laughter, and kept beckoning him to her with her hand, like this. Gavrílo tried to rise, tried to obey the water-nymph, fellows, but, you see, the Lord suggested something to him: he just made the sign of the cross over himself. . . . And how hard he found it to make that sign of the cross, fellows! He says: 'My hand was simply like stone, it would n't move. . . . Akh, thou wicked nymph, ah!'—So, fellows, when he

made the sign of the cross, that water-sprite ceased to laugh, and suddenly began to weep, as it were. . . . She weeps, fellows, and wipes her eyes with her hair, and her hair is as green as thy hemp. So Gavrílo stared and stared at her, and began to question her: 'Why weepest thou, thou imp of the forest?' But the water-sprite says to him: 'Thou shouldst not have crossed thyself, O man,' says she; 'thou mightest have lived with me to the end of thy days; and I am weeping, I am pining away, because thou hast crossed thyself; and 't is not I alone, who shall pine: pine thou, also, until the end of thy days.' Then she vanished, fellows, and Gavrílo immediately understood how he was to get out of the forest. . . . Only, from that time forth, he goes about always in that melancholy way."

"Ekha!"—remarked Fédya, after a brief silence:—"but how can such a wicked forest demon spoil a Christian soul,—he ought n't to have listened to her!"

"Oh, go along with you!"—said Kóstya.—"And Gavrílo said she had such a thin, wailing voice, like a toad's."

"Did thy dad narrate that himself?"—went on Fédya.

"Yes, he did. I was lying on the platform over the oven, and heard everything."

"A wonderful affair! Why should he be melancholy? . . . . Why, you know, if she

called him, 't was because ' she had taken a fancy to him.' "

" Yes, she had taken a fancy to him! "—put in Iliúsha.—" Of course, she wanted to tickle him, —that 's what she wanted. That 's what they do, those water-nymphs."

" Why, and there must be water-nymphs here, too,"—remarked Fédya.

" No,"—replied Kóstya:—" this is a clean place, a free place; for one thing, the river is hard by."

All fell silent. Suddenly, somewhere in the far distance, there rang out a long-drawn, sonorous, almost moaning sound, one of those incomprehensible nocturnal noises, which sometimes well up in the midst of profound stillness, rise aloft, hang suspended in the air, and slowly disperse, at last, as though they died away. You strain your ear,—and it seems as though there were nothing, yet it is tinkling. It seemed as though some one had shouted for a long, long time, at the very horizon, and some one else had answered his shout from the forest with a thin, shrill laugh, and a weak, hissing whistle flew with lightning speed along the river. The little lads exchanged glances, and shuddered.

" The power of the cross be with us! "—whispered Ilyá.

" Ekh, you simpletons! "—cried Pável: " what are you frightened at? Look here, the 'taties are

boiled soft." (They moved up round the little kettle, and began to eat the smoking-hot potatoes; Ványa alone did not stir.) "What 's the matter with thee?"—said Pável.

But he did not crawl forth from under his linden-bast rug. The little kettle was speedily emptied completely.

"But have you heard, my lads,"—began Ilyúsha:—"what happened the other day at Varnávitzy?"

"On the dam, thou meanest?"—asked Fédya.

"Yes, yes, on the dam, the broken dam. 'T is an unhallowed place, you know, so unhallowed, and so God-forsaken. Everywhere around there are such ravines and precipices, and down the precipices snakes breed."

"Well, what happened? Go ahead and tell us."

"Why, this is what happened. Perhaps thou dost not know it, Fédya, but we have a drowned man buried there, and he was drowned long, long ago, when the pond was still deep; only his grave is still visible, and even that is barely visible: 't is just a tiny mound. . . . . Well, the other day, the manager calls up Ermíl the dog-keeper; says he: 'Go to the post-office, Ermíl.' Ermíl always does ride to the post-office: he has starved off all his dogs: that 's why they don't live with him, and they never did live with him, anyway, but he 's a fine whipper-in, he has all the gifts. So Ermíl rode off for the mail, and he lagged in the town,

and he was drunk when he started to ride back. And the night was a bright night: the moon was shining. . . . So Ermíl is riding across the dam: his road lay that way. And as he is riding along, huntsman Ermíl sees, on the drowned man's grave, a young ram strolling about,—such a white, curly, pretty little ram. So Ermíl thinks to himself: 'I 'll catch him,—why should he be wasted like this?'—so he slipped off his horse, and took him in his hands. . . . But the ram did n't mind it at all. So Ermíl goes to his horse, but the horse opens his eyes wide and stares, and neighs and tosses his head; but he untied it, mounted, and the ram with him, and started off again: he held the young ram in front of him. He looked at it, and the ram just stared him straight in the eye. He began to feel uneasy, did Ermíl the huntsman: 'I don't remember ever to have heard,' says he, 'that rams stared folks in the eye in this fashion;' however, he did n't mind; he began to stroke its fur,—and says he: 'Ba-a, ba-a!' And all of a sudden, the ram showed his teeth, and says to him the same: 'Ba-a, ba-a! . . .'"

Before the narrator could utter this last word, the two dogs suddenly rose with one impulse, rushed away from the fire, barking convulsively, and vanished into the darkness. All the boys were thoroughly frightened. Ványa jumped out from under his mat. Pavlúshka flew after

the dogs with a yell. Their barking swiftly retreated into the distance. . . . The uneasy running to and fro of the startled herd of horses was audible. Pavlúsha shouted loudly: "Grey! Beetle!" . . . . . In a few moments, the barking ceased; Pável's voice was already wafted to us from afar. . . . . A little more time elapsed; the boys exchanged glances of bewilderment, as though anticipating that something was about to happen. . . . Suddenly the hoof-beats of a galloping horse became audible; it stopped abruptly at the very fire, and Pavlúsha, who had been clinging to its mane, leaped from its back. The two dogs also sprang into the circle of light, and immediately sat down, lolling out their red tongues.

"What was it yonder? What was the matter?"—asked the boys.

"Nothing,"—replied Pável, waving his hand toward the horse:—"'t was just that the dogs scented something. I thought it was a wolf,"—he added in an indifferent voice, breathing fast, with the full capacity of his chest.

I involuntarily admired Pavlúsha. He was very handsome at that moment. His ugly face, animated by the swift ride, blazed with dashing gallantry and firm resolution. Without even a switch in his hand, he had darted off alone, by night, without the slightest hesitation, to en-

counter a wolf. . . . . "What a splendid boy!" I thought, as I gazed at him.

"And have you seen them,—the wolves, I mean?"—asked cowardly Kóstya.

"There are always a lot of them here,"—replied Pável:—"but they are uneasy only in winter."

Again he curled up in front of the fire. As he seated himself on the ground, he dropped his hand on the shaggy neck of one of the dogs, and for a long time the delighted animal did not turn its head, as it gazed sidelong, with grateful pride, at Pavlúsha.

Ványa cuddled up under his mat again.

"What were those horrors thou wert narrating to us, Iliúsha?"—began Fédya, to whose lot, as the son of a wealthy peasant, it fell to act the part of leader (he himself said very little, as though he were afraid of lowering his dignity).—"And 't was the Evil One who prompted the dogs to set up that barking. . . . But, in fact, I have heard that that locality of yours is unhallowed."

"Varnávitzy? . . . . I should say so! unhallowed the worst way! The old master has been seen there more than once, they say—the deceased master. He wears a long-skirted dressing-gown, they say, and keeps sighing all the while, as though he were hunting for something on the ground. Grandaddy Trofímitch met him

once.—' What is it, dear little father, Iván Iványitch,' says he, ' that thou art searching for on the ground?' "

" He asked him that?"—interrupted the astounded Fédya.

" Yes, he asked him."

" Well, Trofímitch is a gallant fellow to do that. . . . Well, and what happened?"

" ' I 'm looking for the saxifrage,' says he. And he talks in such a dull, dull voice:—' The saxifrage.' [1]—' And what dost thou want of saxifrage, dear little father, Iván Ivánitch?'—' My grave is crushing me, crushing me, Trofímitch; I want to get out, to get out. . . . . .' "

" What a fellow!"—remarked Fédya;—" Probably he had n't lived long enough."

" What a marvel!" said Kóstya:—" I thought dead folks could be seen only on Relatives' Saturday." [2]

" Dead folks can be seen at any hour,"—confidently put in Iliúsha, who, so far as I was able to observe, was better acquainted than the rest with all the rural superstitions. . . . . " But on

[1] Literally, rend-rock—the rock-splitting plant.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Certain Saturdays in the year, on which requiem services are held for dead relatives. One such Saturday occurs in Lent; another in the autumn, called " Dmítry's Day," when dead ancestors in general, and in particular those who fell on that day in the battle of Kulikovo, 1380, under Prince Dmítry ' Donskóy ' (of the Don), which broke the Tatár yoke, are commemorated. But the one particularly referred to here is that which precedes Pentecost (Trinity Sunday and the Day of the Spirit, Monday).—TRANSLATOR.

Relatives' Saturday you can also see the living person whose turn it is to die that year. All you have to do is to sit on the church porch, and keep staring at the road; and those who are destined to die that year will pass by. Peasant-wife Uliyána, of our village, went and sat on the church porch last year."

"Well, and did she see any one?"—inquired Kóstya, with interest.

"Of course she did. At first, she sat there a long, long time, without seeing or hearing anybody . . . . but a dog seemed to keep barking and barking somewhere or other. . . . . All at once, she looks, and a little boy, with nothing on but his shirt, comes walking along the path. She looked closely—'t was Iváshka Feodósyeff . . ."

"The one who died last spring?"—interrupted Fédya.

"The very same. He was walking along, without raising his little head. . . . And Uliyána recognised him. . . But then she looked again, and a woman was coming along. She stared and stared,—akh, O Lord!—'t was she herself, Uliyána herself, who was coming along the road."

"Was it really she herself?"—asked Fédya.

"God is my witness, it was."

"Well, what of it?—she is n't dead yet, you know."

"But the year is n't over yet. Just take a look at her: she 's on the point of death."

All relapsed into silence again. Pável flung a handful of dry twigs on the fire. They turned sharply black with the suddenly upflaring flame, crackled, began to smoke, and set to writhing, thrusting upward their singed tips. The reflection of the fire darted out in all directions, with abrupt flickerings, especially upward. All at once, from somewhere or other, a white pigeon flew straight into this reflection, circled with affright in one spot, all flooded with the hot glare, and disappeared, with flapping wings.

"It must have escaped from home,"—remarked Pável.—"Now it will fly until it hits against something, and it will spend the night, until daybreak, on whatever it hits against."

"See here, Pavlúsha,"—said Kóstya:—"is n't it true, that it was a spirit flying to heaven, hey?"

Pável tossed another handful of twigs on the fire.

"Perhaps so,"—he said at last.

"But tell me, please, Pavlúsha,"—began Fédya:—"was the heavenly vision [1] visible also with you in Shalámovo?"

"When the sun was invisible? Certainly."

"You must have been frightened too, I think?"

"Well, we were n't the only ones. Our master, although he had explained to us beforehand that we should see a vision, was so scared himself, they say, when it began to grow dark, that he

[1] That is what our peasants call an eclipse of the sun.

was beside himself with fear. And in the house-serfs' cottage, the peasant-wife cook, just as soon as it began to grow dark, I hear, took and smashed all the pots in the oven with the oven-fork. 'Who wants to eat now?' says she: 'the day of judgment has come.' And such rumours were circulating in our village, brother,—to the effect that white wolves would overrun the earth, and eat up the people, a bird of prey would swoop down, and then Tríshka himself would be seen." [1]

"What is that Tríshka?"—asked Kóstya.

"Dost not thou know?"—put in Iliúsha hotly:—"well, brother, whence comest thou that thou dost not know about Tríshka? You 're great stay-at-homes in your village, that's what you are! Tríshka will be a wonderful man who will come, and he will be such a wonderful man that it will be impossible to catch him, and no one will be able to do anything to him: so wonderful will the man be. The peasants will want to seize him, for example: they will go out against him with cudgels, they will surround him, but he will avert their eyes,—he will avert their eyes in such a way, that they will slay each other. They will put him in prison, for example,—he will ask for a drink of water in a dipper: they will fetch him the dipper, and he will dive down into it, and that 's the last they will ever see of him. They

[1] The belief in "Tríshka" is, probably, a reflection of the legend about Antichrist.

will put chains on him, but he will shake his hands and they will fall off him. Well, and that Tríshka will go through the villages and the towns; and that Tríshka, the cunning fellow, will lead astray the Christian race . . . . well, and they will not be able to do anything to him. . . . . He will be such a wonderful, such a crafty man."

" Well, yes,"—went on Pavlúsha, in his drawling voice:—" that 's the man. They 've been expecting him in our village too. The old folks said, that as soon as the heavenly vision began, Tríshka would come. So the vision began. All the people scattered out into the street, into the fields, to wait and see what would happen. And we have a conspicuous, extensive site, you know. They are gazing when, suddenly, down-hill from the town, comes some man or other, such a peculiar man, with such a wonderful head . . . they all shout out at once: ' Óï, Tríshka 's coming! óï, Tríshka 's coming!' but 't was nothing of the sort. Our elder crawled into the ditch; his wife got stuck fast in the board at the bottom of the gate, and yelled at the top of her voice; she scared her watch-dog so that it broke loose from its chain, and leaped over the wattled hedge, and fled off to the forest; and Kúzka's father, Dorofyéitch, sprang into the oats, and squatted down, and set to piping like a quail: he thought, perhaps, the enemy, the soul-spoiler, would have mercy on a mere bird. So they all set up a rum-

pus! . . . . But the man who was coming was our cooper, Vavíla; he had bought himself a new tub with handles, and had put the empty tub on his head."

All the boys burst out laughing, and again became silent for a moment, as it often happens with people who are conversing in the open air. I cast a glance around: the night reigned, sovereign, triumphant; the damp chill of late evening had given way to the dry warmth of midnight, and it still had long to lie like a soft coverlet over the slumbering fields; a long time still remained before the first lisp, the first fine dews of dawn. There was no moon in the sky: at that time it rose late. Innumerable golden stars seemed all to have glided softly, twinkling in emulation of one another, in the direction of the Milky Way, and, in truth, as you gazed at them, you yourself began to feel the headlong, uninterrupted onward flight of the earth. . . A strange, sharp, wailing cry suddenly rang out twice in succession over the river, and, after the lapse of a few seconds, was repeated farther away. . . .

Kóstya shuddered: . . . . . "What 's that?"

"That 's a heron screaming,"—returned Pável, composedly.

"A heron,"—repeated Kóstya. . . . "But what was it, Pavlúsha, that I heard last night,"—he added, after a short silence:—"perhaps thou knowest . . . . ."

"What didst thou hear?"

"Why, this is what I heard. I was going from Kámennaya-Gryáda [Stone-Ridge] to Shásh-kino. First I kept altogether in our hazel-copse, and then went by the pool—thou knowest, at the place where it makes a sharp turn into the cliff,—there 's a deep pit there, you see, made by the spring freshets, which never dries up; it 's still all overgrown with reeds, you know; so, as I was walking past that water-hole, boys, somebody began to groan from that same hole, and so pitifully, so pitifully . . 'Oo-oo . . . oo-oo . . . oo-oo!' I was seized with such terror, my brothers: the hour was late, and the voice was so painful.—What could it have been? hey?"

"Thieves drowned Akím the forester in that pool the year before last,"—remarked Pavlúsha; —"so, perhaps, it was his soul wailing."

"Why, that must have been it, my brothers," —returned Kóstya, opening wide his eyes, which were huge already. . . . "I did n't know that they had drowned Akím in that pool: I would have been scared much worse."

"But they say there are small frogs,"—went on Pavlúsha,—"which cry out in that pitiful way."

"Frogs? well, no, it was n't frogs . . . which made that . . . . ." (The heron screamed again above the river).—"Deuce take it!"—ejacu-

lated Kóstya, involuntarily:—" it shrieks like the forest-demon."

" The forest-demon does n't shriek,—he 's dumb,"—put in Iliúsha:—" he only claps his hands and cracks . . . ."

" And hast thou seen him,—the forest-demon? I 'd like to know,"—Fédya interrupted him, sneeringly.

" No, I have n't, and God forbid that I should see him; but other folks have seen him. The other day now, he tricked a peasant; he led him on and on through the forest, and all the while round one and the self-same meadow. . . . . He barely got home by daylight."

" Well, and did he see him? "

" Yes. He says he stands so big, so big, and dark, and muffled up, behind a tree, as it were, so that you can't get a good look at him, as though he were hiding from the moon, and he stares and stares with his little eyes, and blinks them, and blinks . . . ."

" Do stop that! "—exclaimed Fédya, with a slight shudder, and a twitch of his shoulders:—" Pfu! . . . ."

" And why is this nasty crew distributed over the world? "—remarked Pável:—" really now, why? "

Again a pause ensued.

" Look, look, boys,"—suddenly rang out

Ványa's childish voice:—" Look at God's little stars, like bees swarming! "

He poked his fresh little face out from under the mat, propped himself on his little fist, and slowly raised on high his large, tranquil eyes. The eyes of all the little lads were raised to the sky, and were not soon lowered.

" Well, Ványa,"—began Fédya, affectionately:—" how about thy sister Aniútka,—is she well? "

" Yes,"—replied Ványa, with a slight lisp.

" Tell her, we want to know why she does n't come to see us."

" I don't know."

" Tell her that she must come."

" I 'll tell her."

" Tell her that I 'll give her a present."

" And wilt thou give me one too? "

" Yes, I 'll give thee one too."

Ványa sighed.

" Well, no, I don't want it. Better give it to her: she 's such a good girl."

And again Ványa laid his head on the ground. Pável rose, and took the empty kettle in his hand.

" Where art thou going? "—Fédya asked him.

" To the river to dip up some water. I want a drink of water."

The dogs rose and followed him.

" Look out, don't tumble into the river! "—shouted Iliúsha after him.

"Why should he tumble in?"—said Fédya:—"He 'll take care of himself."

"Yes, so he will. All sorts of things happen: he 'll stoop down and begin to dip up the water, and the water-sprite will grab him by the hand and pull him in to himself. Then people will begin to say: 'The little fellow tumbled into the water. . . .' Much he did! . . . . . Yo-onder, he has made his way in among the rushes," he added, listening.

The rushes, in fact, were moving,—"whispering," as they express it among us.

"And is it true,"—asked Kóstya:—"that Akulína the fool has been crazy ever since the time she was in the water?"

"Yes, ever since then. . . Just look at her now! But they say that before that, she used to be a beauty. The water-sprite spoiled her. He did n't expect, you see, that they would pull her out so soon. So he spoiled her, down on the bottom, at his own place."

(I had met that Akulína more than once myself. Covered with rags, frightfully thin, with a face as black as a coal, a confused look, and teeth eternally exposed in a grin, she would stamp up and down for hours in one and the self-same spot, somewhere on the highway, with her bony arms pressed tightly to her breast, and slowly shifting from one foot to the other, like a wild beast in a cage. She understood nothing that

was said to her, and only laughed convulsively from time to time.)

"But they say,"—went on Kóstya,—"that Akulína threw herself into the river, because her lover deceived her."

"That 's exactly why she did it."

"And dost thou remember Vásya?"—added Kóstya, sadly.

"What Vásya?"—inquired Fédya.

"Why, the one who was drowned,"—replied Kóstya. "What a boy he was! i-ikh, what a boy he was! His mother, Feklísta, how she did love him, that Vásya! And she seemed to have a presentiment, did Feklísta, that water would be his ruin. When Vásya used to go to the river with us boys, to bathe, in summer, she would just quiver all over. The other women did n't mind: they would go past with their wash-troughs themselves, waddling along, but Feklísta would set her trough[1] on the ground and begin to call to him. 'Come back,' says she, 'come back, light of my eyes! okh, come back, my dear little falcon!'—And how he came to get drowned, the Lord knows. He was playing on the shore, and his mother was there also, raking up the hay; all at once, she heard some one making bubbles in the water,—and behold, nothing but Vásya's little cap was floating on the water. Alas, ever

[1] The Russian peasant wash-tub is like a long, shallow trough, or chopping-tray, made of a halved and hollowed log.—TRANSLATOR.

since then, Feklísta has not been in her right mind:—she 'll come and lie down on that spot where he was drowned; she 'll lie there, brothers, and strike up a song,—you remember, Vásya always sang the same song,—so she will strike up that song, and weep, and weep, and complain bitterly to God . . . . ."

" Yonder comes Pavlúsha,"—said Fédya.

Pavlúsha came up to the fire with a full kettle in his hand.

" Well, boys,"—he began, after a brief pause: —" something is wrong."

" Why, what 's the matter? "—asked Kóstya, hastily.

" I have heard Vásya's voice."

All fairly shuddered.

" What dost thou mean, what dost thou mean? "—stammered Kóstya.

" God is my witness. No sooner had I begun to stoop down to the water, than suddenly I heard myself called by Vásya's little voice, and from under the water, as it were: ' Pavlúsha, hey there, Pavlúsha, come hither.' I went away. But I dipped up the water all the same."

" Akh, O my Lord! akh, O Lord! "—cried the little lads, crossing themselves.

" That was the water-sprite calling thee, for sure, Pável,"—added Fédya. . . " And we have just been talking about him,—about Vásya."

" Akh, 't is a bad omen,"—faltered Iliúsha.

"Come, 't is nothing, drop it!"—said Pável, decisively, and sat down again:—"you can't escape your fate."

The boys subsided into silence. It was evident that Pável's words had produced a profound impression upon them. They began to stretch themselves out in front of the fire, as though preparing to go to sleep.

"What 's that?"—asked Kóstya, suddenly, raising his head.

Pável listened intently.

"'T is the woodcock flying,—they are whistling."

"But whither are they flying?"

"Away yonder, where, they say, there is no winter."

"And is it possible that there is such a country?"

"There is."

"Is it far away?"

"Yes, far, far away, beyond the warm seas."

Kóstya sighed, and closed his eyes.

More than three hours had already elapsed since I had joined the boys. The moon rose at last: I did not immediately observe it, it was so small and slender. This moonless night, apparently, was as magnificent as before. . . . . But many stars which had but lately stood high in the heavens, were already sinking toward the dark rim of the earth; everything round about had be-

come perfectly quiet, as things generally do only toward dawn: everything was sleeping, with the deep, motionless slumber which precedes the break of day. The air was no longer so strongly perfumed,—it seemed to have again become impregnated with moisture. . . . Summer nights are not long! . . . The prattle of the little lads had died down with the bonfires. . . . The dogs, too, were sleeping; the horses, so far as I was able to make out by the barely-shining, faintly-spreading light of the stars, were also lying down, with drooping heads. . . . A light forgetfulness descended upon me; it passed into slumber.

A fresh current of air blew across my face. I opened my eyes:—morning was breaking. The dawn was not, as yet, glowing red anywhere, but the east was already beginning to grow white. Everything had become visible, though dimly visible, all around. The pale-grey sky was lighting up, turning cold and blue; the stars now twinkled with a faint light, now disappeared; the earth had grown damp, the foliage had begun to sweat; here and there living sounds, voices, were beginning to resound, and a thin, early breeze had begun to stray abroad and flutter over the earth. My body responded to it with a slight, cheerful shiver. I rose briskly to my feet, and walked toward the little boys. They were all sleeping like dead men around the smouldering

bonfire; Pável alone half-rose, and gazed intently at me.

I nodded my head to him and went my way, along the mist-wreathed river. Before I had proceeded two versts, there had streamed forth all around me over the wide, wet meadow, ahead of me, over the hills which were beginning to gleam green, from forest to forest, and behind me, over the long, dusty highway, over the glittering, crimson-tinted bushes, and the river, shyly glinting blue from beneath the dispersing fog—there had streamed forth first scarlet, then red, then golden torrents of young, blazing light. . . . . Everything began to stir, awoke, began to sing, to make a noise, to chatter. Everywhere, like radiant brilliants, glowed great dewdrops; the sounds of a bell were wafted toward me, pure and clear, as though they, also, had been washed by the morning freshness, and, suddenly, the rested herd of horses dashed headlong past me, driven by the lads I have mentioned. . . .

Unfortunately, I am bound to add that Pável died that same year. He was not drowned; he was killed by falling from a horse. 'T is a pity, for he was a splendid young fellow!

IX

KASYÁN FROM THE FAIR-METCHÁ [1]

I WAS returning home from the chase in a jolting peasant cart, and, overwhelmed by the stifling heat of the sultry, overcast summer's day (every one knows that, on such days, the heat is sometimes even more intolerable than on clear days, especially when there is no breeze), was dozing and rolling about, with surly impatience surrendering myself wholly to be devoured by the fine, white dust, which rose incessantly from the beaten road from beneath the disjointed and rickety wheels,—when, all of a sudden, my attention was aroused by the uneasiness and the agitated movements of the body of my coachman, who, up to that moment, had been even more sound asleep than myself. He was jerking at the reins, fidgeting about on the box, and began to shout at the horses, every now and then casting a glance to one side. I looked round. We were driving over a tilled plain; low hillocks, also tilled, ran athwart it, in remarkably steep, wave-like slopes; the eye could take in, at most, only about five versts of waste

[1] The Metchá is a river of Central Russia to which the epithet "Fair" is applied as "Dear little mother" *(Mátushka)* is to the Volga.—TRANSLATOR.

expanse; far away in the distance, small birch copses alone broke the almost straight line of the horizon with their rounded, yet jagged crests. Narrow paths stretched out through the fields, lost themselves in ravines, wound around swells of the land, and on one of them, which intersected our road about five hundred paces ahead of us, I descried some sort of procession. This was what my coachman was looking at.

It was a funeral. In front, in a peasant cart, drawn by one horse, rode the priest at a foot-pace; the chanter sat beside him and drove; behind the cart, four peasant men, with bared heads, bore the coffin, covered with white linen; two peasant women walked behind the coffin. The shrill, lugubrious voice of one of them reached my ears; I listened: she was wailing. Mournfully did that varying yet monotonous, hopelessly-sorrowful chant resound amid the empty fields. The coachman whipped up his horses: he wanted to get ahead of this procession. 'T is a bad omen to meet a funeral on the road. As a matter of fact, he did succeed in galloping past along the road before the corpse managed to reach it; but we had not proceeded a hundred paces, when, all at once, our cart gave a violent lurch, careened on one side, and almost toppled over. The coachman pulled up his horses, which had started to run away, waved his hand in despair, and spat.

"What 's the matter?"—I asked.

My coachman alighted in silence, and without haste.

"But what 's the matter?"

"The axletree is broken . . . . . burned through,"—he replied gloomily, and suddenly adjusted the breeching on the trace-horse with such indignation that the horse came near going over on its side, but retained its footing, snorted, shook itself, and began very calmly to scratch itself with its teeth below the knee of the right leg.

I alighted, and stood for some time in the road, confusedly absorbed by a feeling of disagreeable surprise. The right wheel was turned almost completely under the cart, and seemed to have elevated its hub on high, in dumb despair.

"What is to be done now?"—I asked, at last.

"Yonder 's the one who is to blame!"—said my coachman, pointing with his whip at the procession, which had already had time to turn into the highway, and was approaching us:—"I 've always noticed it,"—he continued:—"'T is a sure sign—to meet a corpse. . . . . Yes."

And again he worried the trace-horse who, perceiving his displeasure and harshness, decided to remain impassive, and only swished its tail modestly from time to time. I walked back and forth for a while, and again came to a halt in front of the wheel.

In the meantime, the corpse had overtaken us.

Turning out peaceably from the road upon the grass, the mournful procession passed our cart. The coachman and I removed our caps, exchanged bows with the priest, and glances with the bearers. They walked with difficulty; their broad chests heaved high. Of the two women who walked behind the coffin, one was very aged and pale; her impassive features, cruelly distorted with grief, retained an expression of strict, rigorous dignity. She walked on in silence, from time to time raising her gaunt hand to her thin, sunken lips. The eyes of the other woman, a young one about five-and-twenty years of age, were red and moist, and her whole face was swollen with weeping; as they came alongside of us, she ceased to wail, and covered her face with her sleeve. . . . . But now the corpse had passed us, had turned out again into the highway, and her mournful, soul-breaking chant rang out once more. Having silently gazed after the coffin, as it rocked with regular motion, my coachman turned to me.

"'T is Martýn the carpenter they 're burying," —said he:—"the one from Ryábaya."

"How dost thou know that?"

"I found it out by the women. The old one is his mother, and the young one is his wife."

"Was he ill?"

"Yes . . . . he had the fever. . . . . The overseer sent for the doctor day before yesterday,

but they did n't find the doctor at home. . . . . And he was a good carpenter; rather given to drinking, but a fine carpenter he was. You see how that woman of his is killing herself. . . . . Well, yes, 't is well known: women's tears are cheap. Women's tears are just the same as water. . . . . Yes."

And he bent down, crawled under the rein of the trace-horse, and seized the arch with both hands.[1]

" But,"—I remarked:—" what are we to do? "

My coachman first braced his knee against the shoulder of the shaft-horse, shook the arch a couple of times, adjusted the saddle, then crawled back again under the rein of the trace-horse, and, giving it a shove in the muzzle in passing, he stepped up to the wheel—stepped up to it, and, without removing his gaze from it, pulled from beneath the skirts of his coat a birch-bark snuff-box, slowly tugged at the strap on its cover, slowly thrust his two thick fingers into the snuff-box (and it would hardly hold two), kneaded and kneaded the snuff, puckered up his nose in advance, inhaled the snuff with pauses between, accompanying each sniff with a prolonged grunt, and, screwing up his lids in a painful way, and blinking his tearful eyes, he plunged into profound meditation.

[1] The arch connecting the shafts, over the neck of the trotter. The side horses (sometimes only one is used, instead of two) are very slightly attached by traces.—Translator.

" Well, what now? "—I said at last.

My coachman carefully replaced the snuff-box in his pocket, pulled his cap down on his eyebrows, without using his hands, with a movement of his head alone, and thoughtfully climbed upon his box.

" Whither art thou going? "—I asked him, not without surprise.

" Please take your seat,"—he replied calmly, and gathered up the reins.

" But how are we going to drive? "

" We 'll drive on all right, sir."

" But the axle. . . ."

" Please take your seat."

" But the axle is broken . . . . ."

" 'T is broken, yes, 't is broken; but we shall manage to get to the settlement . . . . at a walk,—that is to say, yonder, behind the grove, there are dwellings: 't is called Yúdino."

" And dost thou think that we can get there? "

My coachman did not vouchsafe me an answer.

" I would rather go afoot,"—said I.

" As you please, sir. . . . ."

And he flourished his whip. The horses started.

We really did reach the settlement, although the right front wheel hardly held, and revolved in a remarkably strange manner. On one hillock, it came near flying off; but my coachman shouted

in a vicious voice, and we made the descent in safety.

The Yúdino hamlet consisted of six tiny, low-roofed cottages, which had already managed to sag down to one side, although, in all probability, they had been erected not long before; not all their yards were enclosed with wattled hedges. As we drove into this settlement, we encountered not a single living soul; there were no hens, nor dogs even, visible in the street; only one black dog, with a bob-tail, sprang out at our appearance, from a completely dried trough, where it must have been driven by thirst, and immediately, without barking, darted headlong under a gate. I entered the first cottage, opened the door into the anteroom, called for the owners,—no one answered me. I shouted a second time: the hungry mewing of a cat resounded on the other side of the door. I pushed it open with my foot; an emaciated cat slipped quickly past me, her green eyes flashing in the dark. I put my head into the room, and looked: it was dark, smoky, and empty. I betook myself to the back yard, and there was no one there, either. . . . A calf was bleating in the paddock; a lame, grey goose was hobbling about a little to one side. I went on to the second cottage,—and there was not a soul in the second cottage. I went to the yard . . . . . .

In the very middle of the brightly illuminated yard, in the very heart of the heat, as the expres-

sion is, there was lying, as it seemed to me, a small boy, face to the ground, his head covered with his long peasant coat. A few paces from him, beside a wretched little cart, stood an emaciated horse in a tattered harness under a thatched shed. The sunlight, falling in streams through the narrow interstices of the rickety penthouse roof, streaked its shaggy, reddish-brown hide with small, bright blotches. There, also, in a lofty bird-house, the starlings were chattering, staring down with calm curiosity from their aërial little dwelling. I went up to the sleeper, and began to rouse him. . . . .

He raised his head, saw me, and immediately sprang to his feet. . . . " What is it, what 's wanted? What 's the matter? " he muttered, half-awake.

I did not answer him on the instant: so astonished was I by his personal appearance. Picture to yourself a dwarf fifty years of age, with a tiny, swarthy, wrinkled face, a sharp-pointed little nose, small, brown, hardly visible eyes, and thick, curly black hair, which sat on his tiny head like the broad cap on a mushroom.

His whole body was extremely puny and thin, and it is absolutely impossible to convey in words how strange and remarkable was his glance.

" What 's wanted? "—he asked me again.

I explained to him the state of the case; he lis-

tened to me, never taking his slowly blinking eyes off me.

"Cannot we obtain a new axle?"—I said at last:—"I should be glad to pay for it."

"But who are you? sportsmen?"—he inquired, surveying me from head to foot with a glance.

"Yes."

"You shoot the birds of heaven, I suppose? . . and wild beasts? . . . . And don't you think it is a sin to slay God's birds, to shed innocent blood?"

The queer little old man spoke with great deliberation. The sound of his voice also surprised me. Not only was there nothing infirm audible in it,—it was wonderfully sweet, youthful, and almost effeminately tender.

"I have no axle,"—he added, after a brief pause:—"that one yonder is of no use"—(he pointed at his little cart)—"you have a large cart, I suppose?"

"And cannot one be found in the village?"

"What sort of a village do you call this! . . . No one here has one. . . And there 's no one at home, either: they are all at work. Go your way,"—he said suddenly, and lay down again on the ground.

I had not in the least expected this termination.

"Listen, old man,"—I began, touching his shoulder:—"please to help me."

"Go your way, and God be with you! I 'm

tired: I 've been to the town,"—he said to me, and dragged his coat over his head.

" But please do me the favour,"—I went on:—" I . . . I will pay."

" I don't want thy pay."

" But please, old man . . . ."

He half raised himself, and sat up, with his thin little legs crossed.

" I might guide thee to the place where they are felling timber. Some merchants have bought our grove,—may God judge them, they are carrying off our grove, and have built an office,—may God be their judge! Perhaps thou couldst order an axle of them there, or buy one ready-made."

" Capital! "—I exclaimed joyously. . . " The very thing! . . . let us go."

" An oaken axle, a good one,"—he went on, without rising from his place.

" And is it far to the timber-felling place? "

" Three versts."

" Well, never mind! We can drive there in thy cart."

" But you can't . . . ."

" Come along, let 's start,"—said I.—" Let 's start, old man! My coachman is waiting for us in the street."

The old man rose reluctantly, and followed me to the street. My coachman was in an exasperated state of mind: he had undertaken to water his horses, but there turned out to be extremely

little water in the well, and it had a bad flavour, which, so coachmen say, is of prime importance. . . . Nevertheless, at the sight of the old man, he grinned, nodded his head, and exclaimed:

"Ah, Kasyánushka! morning!"

"Morning, Eroféi, upright man!"—replied Kasyán, in a dejected voice.

I immediately communicated his proposition to the coachman; Eroféi expressed his assent, and drove into the yard. While he, with deliberate bustle, unharnessed his horses, the old man stood, with his shoulders leaning against the gate, and stared uncheerfully now at him, now at me. He seemed, somehow, perplexed: he was not overjoyed at our appearance, so far as I could observe.

"And dost thou mean to say that they have sent thee too off here to settle?"—asked Eroféi, suddenly, as he removed the arch from the shaft-horse.

"Me too."

"Ekh!"—said my coachman through his teeth. —"Knowest thou Martýn the carpenter . . . for thou dost know Martýn from Ryábaya, of course?"

"I do."

"Well, he 's dead. We have just met his coffin."

Kasyán shuddered.

"He 's dead?"—he said, and dropped his eyes.

"Yes, he is dead. Why didst not thou cure

him, hey? For they say that thou dost cure, that thou art a healer."

My coachman was, evidently, amusing himself, ridiculing the old man.

"And is this thy cart?"—he added, indicating it with his shoulder.

"Yes."

"Well, what a cart! . . . . d'ye call that a cart?"—he repeated, and taking it by the shafts, he almost turned it upside down. . . . . "A cart! . . . And what are you going to drive to the clearing in? . . . . You can't harness our horse in these shafts: our horses are large,—and what do you call that?"

"I don't know,"—replied Kasyán,—"what you will ride in: perhaps on that little beast yonder,"—he added, with a sigh.

"On that one, dost thou mean?"—put in Eroféi, and stepping up to Kasyán's wretched nag, he poked it disdainfully in the neck with the third finger of his right hand.—"Humph,"—he added reproachfully:—"it's fast asleep, the idiot!"

I requested Eroféi to harness it to the cart as speedily as possible. I wanted to drive with Kasyán to the clearing: partridges are frequently to be found at such spots. When the cart was quite ready, and I had contrived, somehow or other, to ensconce myself and my dog on its warped, linden-bark bottom, and Kasyán, curling himself up

in a ball and with his previous dejected expression on his face, had also taken his seat, on the front rim,—Eroféi approached me, and with a mysterious aspect whispered:

"And well have you done, dear little father, in driving with him. For he 's that sort of a man, he 's a holy fool,[1] and his nickname is—The Flea. I don't know how you managed to understand him. . . . ." I wanted to remark to Eroféi, that, so far, Kasyán had seemed to me to be a very sensible man; but my coachman immediately proceeded, in the same tone:

"Just you keep a sharp watch, to see that he takes you to the right place. And please to pick out the axle yourself: please to get as healthy an axle as possible. . . . .

"How now, Flea,"—he added aloud:—"can a body get a bit of bread from you?"

"Seek: perchance, it may be found,"—replied Kasyán, jerking the reins, and we drove off.

His little horse, to my sincere amazement, went far from badly. During the entire course of our drive, Kasyán preserved an obstinate silence, and to my questions replied abruptly and reluctantly. We soon reached the felling-place, and there betook ourselves to the office, a lofty cottage, which stood isolated above a small ravine that had been hastily spanned by a dam and converted into a

[1] These "holy fools," or simple-minded eccentrics, are greatly respected even at the present day in Russia.—TRANSLATOR.

pond. In that office I found two young merchants' clerks, with snow-white teeth, sweet eyes, sweet, alert speech, and sweetly-wily little smiles, struck a bargain with them for an axle, and set off for the clearing. I thought that Kasyán would remain with the horse, and wait for me; but he suddenly stepped up to me.

"Art thou going to shoot birds?"—he began:—"hey?"

"Yes, if I find any."

"I 'll go with thee. . . . May I?"

"Yes, thou mayest."

And he went.—The area which had been cleared was, altogether, about a verst in extent. I must confess, that I looked more at Kasyán than at my dog. Not without reason was he called The Flea. His black, wholly uncovered head (moreover, his hair was a fine substitute for any cap) fairly hopped through the bushes. He walked with remarkable briskness, and kept constantly skipping, as it were, as he walked, bent down incessantly, plucked some weeds or other, thrust them into his bosom, muttered to himself, and kept looking at me and my dog, with a very strange, searching glance. In the low bushes, in the undergrowth, and on clearings there dwell small grey birds, which are incessantly flitting from tree to tree and chirping, suddenly swooping in flight. Kasyán mimicked them, and answered their calls; a young quail flew up, twitter-

ing, from under his very feet,—he twittered back to it; a lark began to descend above him, fluttering its wings and warbling loudly,—Kasyán joined in its song. With me he still would not talk. . .

The weather was magnificent, still finer than before; but the heat did not abate. Athwart the clear sky floated infrequent, high-hanging clouds of a yellowish-white hue, like late-lying snow in spring, flat and long, like reefed sails. Their fancifully-patterned edges, light and downy as cotton, slowly but visibly changed with every passing moment: they melted away, those clouds, and no shadow fell from them. Kasyán and I roamed for a long time about the clearing. The young shoots, which had not, as yet, managed to extend themselves longer than an arshín,[1] surrounded with their smooth, slender stems the low, blackened stumps; round, spongy excrescences with grey borders, those same punk-growths from which tinder is made, clung close to the stumps; the strawberry had sent forth its rosy tendrils over them; and mushrooms sat there also, close-crowded in families. One's feet were incessantly entangled and held fast in the long grass, dried through and through by the burning sun; everywhere the eyes were dazzled by the sharp, metallic glitter of the young, reddish leaves on the

[1] Twenty-eight inches—the Russian measure corresponding to the yard.—TRANSLATOR.

trees; all about, the blue clusters of the vetch, the golden chalices of the buttercups, the half-purple half-yellow flowers of John-and-Mary [1] formed a gay-coloured carpet; here and there, alongside the abandoned paths, whereon the traces of wheels were indicated by streaks of a fine, red weed, rose piles of firewood blackened by wind and rain, each containing a cord; a faint shadow was cast by their slanting corners,—there was no other shadow anywhere. A light breeze now woke up, now subsided: it would suddenly blow straight in my face, and frolic, as it were,—rustle merrily, nod and flutter around, gracefully rock the slender tips of the ferns,—and I would rejoice in it . . . but, lo, it has died down, and everything is calm again. Only the grasshoppers shrilled vigorously, as though angry,—and that uninterrupted, harsh, piercing sound is fatiguing. It is suited to the importunate heat of midday; it seems to be born of it, evoked by it, as it were, from the red-hot earth.

At last, without having hit upon a single lair of game, we reached the new clearing. There the recently felled aspens lay sadly on the ground, crushing the grass and the undergrowth; on some, leaves still green, but already dead, hung limply from the motionless boughs; on others, they had already dried and curled up. From the

[1] A mint-like plant which has bright-purple leaves and stems and bright-yellow flowers, called "Iván-da-Márya."—TRANSLATOR.

fresh, golden-white chips, which lay in heaps around the brilliantly moist stumps, there was exhaled an extremely agreeable, bitter odour. Far away, nearer the grove, the axes were tapping dully, and, at times, solemnly and quietly, as though bowing and spreading out its arms, a curly-foliaged tree sank earthward.

For a long time, I found no game; at last, out of a spreading oak-bush, through the wormwood with which it was overgrown, a corncrake flew forth. I fired; it turned a somersault in the air, and fell. On hearing the shot, Kasyán swiftly covered his eyes with his hand, and did not move until I had reloaded my gun and picked up the corncrake. But when I started onward, he went up to the spot where the dead bird had fallen, bent down to the grass, on which a few drops of blood were sprinkled, shook his head, cast a frightened glance at me. . . . . Afterward, I heard him whispering: "A sin! . . . . Akh, this is a sin!"

The heat made us, at last, enter the grove. I threw myself down under a tall hazel-bush, over which a stately young maple spread finely abroad its light branches. Kasyán seated himself on the thick end of a felled birch-tree. I looked at him. The foliage was swaying faintly up aloft, and its liquid greenish shadows slipped gently back and forth over his puny body, wrapped up, after a fashion, in his dark coat, over his small face. He did not raise his head. Bored by his taciturnity,

I lay on my back, and began to admire the peaceful play of the tangled leaves against the far-off brilliant sky. 'T is a wonderfully agreeable occupation, to lie on one's back in the forest, and stare upward! It seems to you as though you were gazing into a bottomless sea, that it spreads broadly beneath you, that the trees do not rise out of the earth, but, like the roots of huge plants, descend, hang suspended, in those crystal-clear waves; the leaves on the trees now are of translucent emerald, again thicken into golden, almost black green. Somewhere, far away, terminating a slender branch, a separate leaf stands motionless against the blue patch of transparent sky, and by its side sways another, recalling by its movements the play of a fish's gills, as though the movement proceeded from its own volition, and were not produced by the breeze. The white, round clouds softly float and softly pass, like enchanted submarine islands,—and then, all of a sudden, that whole sea, that radiant atmosphere, those boughs and leaves flooded with sunlight, begin to undulate, to tremble with a fugitive gleam, and a fresh, hurried lisping, resembling the unending, tiny plash of swelling surge, arises. You do not stir —you gaze: and it is impossible to express in words what joy, tranquillity, and sweetness reign in your heart. You gaze:—that deep, pure azure evokes a smile upon your lips, as innocent as itself; as the clouds sail over the sky, and in

their company, as it were, happy memories pass in garlands through your soul, and it seems to you that your gaze recedes further and further away, and draws you after it, into that calm, beaming abyss, and that it is impossible to tear yourself from that height, from that depth . . . .

"Master, hey there, master!"—said Kasyán, suddenly, in his melodious voice.

I half-rose with amazement; hitherto, he had barely answered my questions, and now he had suddenly begun to speak of his own accord.

"What dost thou want?"—I asked.

"Well, why didst thou kill that bird?"—he began, looking me straight in the face.

"What dost thou mean by 'why'? . . . . The corncrake is game: it can be eaten."

"That 's not the reason why thou didst kill it, master: much thou wilt eat it! Thou hast killed it for thine amusement."

"Why, surely, thou thyself, I suppose, dost eat geese and chickens?"

"That is a bird appointed by God for man, but the corncrake is a free bird, a forest bird. And not he alone: there are quantities of them, of all sorts of forest creatures, and creatures of the field, and the river, and the swamp, both up-stream and down-stream,—and 't is a sin to kill them, and they ought to be allowed to live on the earth until their time comes. . . . But another food is appointed to man, a different food and a different

drink: grain is God's blessed gift, and the waters of heaven, and tame fowl, from our ancient fathers' day."

I stared in amazement at Kasyán. His words flowed fluently; he did not pause to seek them, he spoke with quiet enthusiasm and gentle dignity, closing his eyes from time to time.

"And so, according to thy view, it is sinful to kill a fish, also?"—I asked.

"A fish has cold blood,"—he returned, with confidence:—"a fish is a dumb brute. It does not fear, it does not rejoice: a fish is a creature without the power of speech. A fish does not feel, the blood in it is not lively. . . Blood,"—he went on, after a pause,—"is a holy thing! Blood does not behold God's dear little sun, blood hides itself from the light . . . 't is a great sin to show blood to the light, a great sin and horror. . . . Okh, very great!"

He sighed, and cast down his eyes. I must admit, that I stared at the strange old man in utter amazement. His speech did not have the ring of a peasant: the common people do not speak like that, neither do fine talkers. This language was thoughtfully-solemn and strange. . . . I had never heard anything like it.

"Tell me, please, Kasyán,"—I began, without taking my eyes from his slightly-flushed face:—"what is thy occupation?"

He did not at once answer my question. His gaze roved uneasily for a moment.

"I live as the Lord commands,"—he said at last,—"and, as for an occupation,—no, I have none. I have n't had much sense since my childhood; I work, as long as my strength lasts, —I 'm a poor workman . . . . how should I be otherwise! I have no health, and my hands are stupid. Well, and in springtime I snare nightingales."

"Thou snarest nightingales?—But didst not thou say, that one should not touch any creature of the forest or the field, and so forth?"

"They must not be killed, that is true; death will take his own, in any case. There 's Martýn the carpenter, for example: Martýn lived and did not live long, and died; now his wife is wasting away with sorrow over her husband and her little children. . . . Neither man nor beast can cheat death. Death does not run, and you cannot run from it; but you must n't aid it. And I don't kill the nightingales,—the Lord forbid! I don't catch them for torture, nor for the destruction of their life, but for man's pleasure, consolation, and delectation."

"Dost thou go to Kursk [1] to catch them?"

"I do go to Kursk, and even further, as it happens. I pass the night in the marshes, and

[1] The nightingales of the Kursk Government are accounted the finest in Russia.—TRANSLATOR.

on the borders of the forest; I spend the night alone in the fields, in the wilds: there the snipe whistle, there the hares cry, there the wild drakes quack.—In the evening I observe, in the morning I listen, at dawn I spread my nets over the bushes. . . . . Sometimes a nightingale sings so mournfully, so sweetly . . . . even mournfully."

"And dost thou sell them?"

"I give them away to good people."

"And what else dost thou do?"

"What do I do?"

"What is thy business?"

The old man remained silent a while.

"I have no business. . . . I 'm a bad workman. But I can read and write."

"Thou canst?"

"I can. The Lord, and good people, have aided me."

"Well, art thou a family man?"

"No, I have no family."

"How is that? . . . Have they all died?"

"No, it just happened so; it did n't chance to be my luck in life. But that is all under God's care, we all go under God's care; and a man must be upright,—so he must! He must please God, that is to say."

"And hast thou no relatives?"

"I have . . . yes . . . . in a way . . ."

The old man stammered.

"Tell me, please,"—I began:—"I heard my coachman ask thee, why thou didst not heal Martýn? Dost thou know how to heal?"

"Thy coachman is an upright man,"—Kasyán answered me, thoughtfully:—"but he is not without sin also. They call me a physician. . . I a physician, forsooth! . . . . and who can cure? All that comes from God. But there are . . . there are plants, there are flowers: they do help, really. Here 's the bur-marigold, for example; 't is a good weed for man; here 's the plantain, too; 't is no disgrace to speak of them; they are clean plants—God's plants. Well, but others are not like that: and they help, but 't is a sin; and 't is a sin to speak of them. It might be done with prayer, perhaps. . . . . Well, of course, there are words which . . . . And he who believes shall be saved,"—he added, lowering his voice.

"Didst thou not give Martýn anything?"—I asked.

"I heard of it too late,"—replied the old man. —"But what of that!—each one will get what is written in his fate. Martýn was not destined to live long on earth: that 's a fact. No, the dear sun does not warm a man who is not fated to live long on earth, as it does other men, and neither does his bread profit him,—'t is as though something summoned him away. . . . Yes; Lord rest his soul!"

"Is it long since they sent you to live in our parts?"—I asked him, after a brief silence.

Kasyán gave a start.

"No, not long: four years. In the old master's time, we always lived in our former place, but the Council of Guardians removed us. Our old master was a gentle soul, a meek man,—the kingdom of heaven be his! Well, the Council of Guardians judged rightly, of course; 't is evident, that so it was right."

"But where did you formerly live?"

"We are from the Fair-Metchá."

"Is that far from here?"

"About a hundred versts."

"And was it better than here?"

"Yes . . . 't was better. There the lands were fertile river-meadows, our nest; but here we have cramped lands, and drought. . . . We are orphaned here. Yonder, at our Fair-Metchá you would climb a hill, and climb—and, O Lord my God, what did you see? hey? River, and meadows, and forest; and there was a church there, and then the meadows began again, you could see far, far away. How far you could see! . . . you gaze and gaze,—akh, truly, you cannot express your feelings! Well, here, to tell the truth, the land is better: clay, good clay, say the peasants; and my grain bears well everywhere."

"Come, old man, tell me the truth: I think thou wouldst like to visit thy native place?"

"Yes, I would like to have a look at it. But 't is good everywhere. I 'm a man without a family, a rover. Well, and that 's nothing! can one sit much at home? But when you walk, when you walk," he interposed, raising his voice, "your heart is lighter, in truth. The dear little sun lights you, and you are more visible to God, and can sing in better tune. You look to see what grass is growing; well, you observe it, you pluck it. The water flows fresh from a spring, for example: holy water; so you drink your fill,—you note it also. The heavenly birds sing. . . And then, beyond Kursk lie steppes, such level steppes, and there is wonder and satisfaction for a man, there is liberty, there is God's grace! And they extend, so people say, clear to the warm seas, where the bird Gamáiun the sweet-voiced dwells, and the leaves do not fall from the trees in winter, nor in autumn, and golden apples grow on silver boughs, and every man lives in abundance and uprightness. . . For I 've been in ever so many places! I 've been to Romyón, and in Simbírsk the splendid town, and in golden-domed Moscow too; I 've been on our benefactress the Oká River, and on the Tzna, the darling, and on dear little mother Volga, and have seen many people, kind peasants, and have tarried in honourable towns. . . . Well, I would like to go thither—and you see . . . . and yet . . . . And I 'm not the only sinful one . . . . many other peasants

wear linden-bark slippers, roam about the world, seek the truth . . . . yes! . . . . But as for home, hey? There 's no uprightness in man—that there is n't. . . . ."

These last words Kasyán uttered rapidly, almost unintelligibly; then he said something more, which I could not catch, and his face assumed such a strange expression, that I involuntarily recalled the appellation " holy fool." He cast down his eyes, cleared his throat, and seemed to recover himself.

" What a dear little sun!"—he said in an undertone:—" What grace,—O Lord! what warmth in the forest!"

He shrugged his shoulders, paused for a moment, glanced abstractedly about, and began to sing softly. I could not catch all the words of his drawling song; but I heard the following:

" They call me Kasyán,
Nicknamed The Flea. . . ."

" Eh!"—thought I:—" why, he 's improvising." . . . . All at once he started, and stopped short, staring intently into the dense part of the forest. I turned round, and perceived a small peasant maiden, ten years of age, in a little blue sarafán,[1] with a checked kerchief on her head,

[1] The true peasant gown, gathered full on a band, falling in straight folds from the armpits, and supported by cross-bands over the shoulders.—TRANSLATOR.

and a plaited basket in her bare, sunburned hand. She had, probably, not in the least expected to encounter us; she had hit on us, as the expression is, and stood motionless in a green clump of hazel-bushes in a shady little glade, timidly gazing at me with her black eyes. I barely managed to survey her; she immediately ducked behind a tree.

"Ánnushka! Ánnushka! come hither, fear not,"—called the old man, affectionately.

"I 'm afraid,"—resounded a shrill little voice.

"Don't be afraid, come to me."

Ánnushka silently abandoned her ambush, softly made the circuit of it,—her childish footsteps were hardly audible on the thick grass,—and emerged from the thicket close to the old man. She was not a child of eight, as she had seemed to me at first, from her stunted growth, but of thirteen or fourteeen. Her whole body was small and thin, but very well made and agile, and her pretty little face bore a remarkable resemblance to that of Kasyán, although Kasyán was not a beauty. There were the same sharp features, the same strange gaze, cunning and confiding, thoughtful and piercing, and the movements were the same. . . . Kasyán ran his eyes over her; she was standing with her side to him.

"Well, hast thou been gathering mushrooms?" —he asked.

"Yes, mushrooms,"—she replied, with a shy smile.

"Hast thou found many?"

"Yes." (She darted a swift glance at him, and smiled again.)

"And are there any white ones?"

"Yes, some are white."

"Show them, show them." . . . (She lowered the basket from her arm and half-raised a broad burdock leaf, which covered the mushrooms.)—"Eh!"—said Kasyán, bending over the basket; "why, what splendid ones! Good for thee, Ánnushka!"

"Is this thy daughter, Kasyán?"—I asked. (Ánnushka's face flushed faintly.)

"No, just a relative,"—said Kasyán, with feigned carelessness.—"Well, run along, Ánnushka,"—he immediately added:—"run along, and God be with thee. And see here . . . ."

"But why should she go afoot?"—I interrupted him.—"We will drive her with us."

Ánnushka flushed as scarlet as a poppy, seized the handle of the basket with both hands, and cast a glance of trepidation at the old man.

"No, she 'll get there, all right,"—he returned, in the same indifferently-drawling tone. —"What is it to her? . . . She 'll get there as she is. . . . Run along."

Ánnushka walked off briskly into the forest. Kasyán gazed after her, then cast down his eyes, and smiled. In that prolonged smile, in the few words which he had uttered to Ánnushka, in the

very sound of his voice when he spoke to her, there was inexplicable, passionate love and tenderness. He cast another glance in the direction whither she had gone, smiled again, and, mopping his face, shook his head several times.

"Why didst thou send her off so soon?"—I asked him:—"I would have liked to buy her mushrooms. . . . ."

"But you can buy them at home, just as well, whenever you like,"—he answered me, for the first time addressing me as "you."

"Thou hast there a very pretty girl."

"No. . . . The idea! . . . . So-so . . ." he replied, reluctantly, as it were; and, from that moment, relapsed into his former taciturnity.

Perceiving that all my efforts to make him talk again were vain, I wended my way to the clearing. Moreover, the heat had decreased somewhat; but my ill-success continued, and I returned to the settlement with nothing but the one corncrake and a new axle. As we were driving into the yard, Kasyán suddenly turned to me.

"Master, eh, Master,"—said he:—"I am to blame toward thee; for 't was I that drove all the game away from thee."

"How so?"

"Well, that 's my secret. And thou hast a trained hound, and a good one, but thou couldst do nothing. When you come to think of it, what

are men,—men, hey? Man's a wild beast, but see what has been done with him!"

It would have been useless for me to try to convince Kasyán that it was impossible to "bewitch" the game, therefore I made him no reply. And besides, we immediately turned into the gate.

Ánnushka was not in the cottage; she had managed to get there already and leave her basket of mushrooms. Eroféi fitted the axle in place, after having subjected it preliminarily to severe and unjust criticism; and an hour later, I drove out, having left Kasyán a little money, which, at first, he did not wish to accept; but afterward, when he had reflected and held it in his palm, he thrust it into his bosom. He hardly uttered a single word during the course of that hour; he stood as before, leaning against the gate, made no reply to the reproaches of my coachman, and took an extremely cold leave of me.

As soon as I returned, I observed that my Eroféi was again in a gloomy frame of mind. . . . And, in fact, he had not found a morsel to eat in the village, and the watering facilities for his horses were bad. We drove off. With dissatisfaction expressed even in the nape of his neck, he sat on the box and was frightfully anxious to enter into conversation with me; but, in anticipation of my putting the first question, he confined himself to a low growling under his breath,

and hortatory, sometimes vicious speeches addressed to his horses.—"A village!"—he muttered: "A pretty sort of village, forsooth! I asked for just a little kvas—and there was no kvas. . . . . Akh, O Lord! And the water,—simply—phew!" (He spat aloud.) "No cucumbers, no kvas,—no nothing. . . . Come now, thou,"—he added in a loud tone, addressing the right trace-horse:—"I know thee, thou pampered beast! Thou 'rt fond of indulging thyself, I think. . . ." (And he lashed it with his whip.) "The horse has grown thoroughly crafty, but what a willing beast it used to be! . . . Come, come, look round this way!"[1] . . . . .

"Tell me, please, Eroféi,"—I began:—"what sort of a man is Kasyán?"

Eroféi did not answer me promptly; he was, in general, a deliberate, leisurely man; but I was instantly able to divine that my question had delighted and reassured him.

"The Flea, you mean?"—he said, at last, jerking at the reins:—"he 's a splendid man: a holy fool, right enough he is; you won't soon find another such fine man. Now, for example, he 's, point for point, exactly like our roan horse yonder: he 's incorrigible, has got out of hand,—that is to say, he has struck work. Well, and, after all,

[1] A well-trained trace-horse (which gallops), in a three-horse span (a tróïka), is supposed to hold its head lowered and twisted backward, so that the persons in the carriage can see its eyes and nostrils.—TRANSLATOR.

what sort of a workman is he, what a wretched body holds his soul,—well, and, all the same . . . . You see, he has been so from his childhood. At first, he used to go with his uncles in the carrying business: he had three of them; well, and then, later on, you know, he got tired of that—he threw it up. He began to live at home, and he would n't even sit still at home: such an uneasy man he was,—a regular flea. Luckily for him, he happened to have a kind master who did n't force him. So, from that time forth, he has been lounging about, like an unconfined sheep. And such a wonderful man he is, God knows: sometimes he 's as silent as a stump, then, all of a sudden, he 'll start to talk,—and what he 'll say, God knows. Is that any way to do? 'T is not. He 's an inconsistent man, so he is. But he sings well. So solemnly—'t is fine, fine."

" And does he really heal? "

" Heal, do you mean? . . . Come, how could he! As if he were that sort of a man! But he cured me of scrofula. . . How could he! He 's a stupid man, so he is,"—he added, after a brief pause.

" Hast thou known him long? "

" Yes. He and I were neighbours in Sytchóvko, on the Fair Metchá."

" And who is that young girl, Ánnushka, who met us in the forest,—is she a relative of his? "

Eroféi glanced at me over his shoulder, and grinned to the full extent of his mouth.

"Eh! . . . . Yes, she 's a relative. She 's an orphan: she has no mother, and no one knows who her mother was. Well, and she must be related to him: she 's awfully like him. . . . Well, and she lives with him. She 's a sharp-witted girl, there 's no denying it: she 's a good girl, and he, the old man, fairly adores her: she is a good girl. And 't is very likely, although you might not believe it, that he has taken it into his head to teach his Ánnushka to read and write. That 's just what you might expect of him: he 's such a peculiar man. So fickle, even ill-balanced, even . . . E-e-eh!" my coachman suddenly interrupted himself, and pulling up his horses, bent over to one side, and began to sniff the air.—"Don't I smell something burning? That I do! I would n't give a rap for these new axles. . . . But, apparently, I greased it all right. I must go and fetch some water: yonder is a pond handy, by the way."

And Eroféi slowly climbed down from his seat, untied the bucket, went to the pond, and, on his return, listened, not without satisfaction, to the hissing of the wheel-box, suddenly gripped by the water. . . . In the space of about ten versts, he was forced to deluge the axle six times, and night had fully closed in when we reached home.

X

THE AGENT

About fifteen versts from my estate, lives an acquaintance of mine, a young landed proprietor, a retired officer of the Guards, Arkády Pávlitch Pyénotchkin. He has a great deal of game on his estate, his house is built after a plan by a French architect, his servants are dressed in English style, he gives capital dinners, welcomes his guests cordially, and, nevertheless, one is reluctant to go to his house. He is a sagacious, positive man, has received a fine education, as is proper, has been in the service, has mingled with the highest society, and now occupies himself, very successfully, with the administration of his property. Arkády Pávlitch, to use his own words, is stern but just, is deeply concerned for the welfare of his subjects, and chastises them—for their own good. "One must treat them like children," he says, on such occasions: "their ignorance, *mon cher, il faut prendre cela en considération.*" But on the occasions of such so-called sad necessity, he avoids harsh and impetuous movements, and is not fond of raising his voice, but is rather given to poking his finger straight out before him, calmly remarking: "Thou knowest, I requested

thee, my dear fellow," or: "What ails thee, my friend? Come to thy senses;" merely compressing his lips a little the while, and twisting his mouth. He is short of stature, elegantly built, very good-looking, keeps his hands and finger-nails with the greatest neatness; his rosy lips and face fairly glow with health. His laugh is resonant and care-free, he screws up his bright brown eyes affably. He dresses extremely well, and with taste; he imports French books, pictures, and newspapers, but is not very fond of reading: he has barely conquered "The Wandering Jew." He plays cards in a masterly manner. Altogether, Arkády Pávlitch is regarded as one of the most cultured noblemen and most enviable matrimonial catches in our government; the ladies are wild over him, and praise his manners in particular. His demeanour is wonderfully good, he is as cautious as a cat, and has never been mixed up in any scandal since he was born, although, on occasion, he is fond of asserting himself and reducing a timid man to confusion. He positively loathes bad company—he is afraid of compromising himself; on the other hand in jovial moments, he announces himself to be a disciple of Epicurus, although, on the whole, he speaks ill of philosophy, calling it "the foggy food of German brains," and sometimes simply "nonsense." He is fond of music, also; at cards, he hums through his teeth, but with feel-

ing; he remembers something from " Lucia " and " Sonnambula," but always gets the pitch rather high. In winter, he goes to Petersburg. His house is in remarkable order; even his coachmen have succumbed to his influence, and every day they not only wipe off the horse-collars and brush their coats, but even wash their own faces. Arkády Pávlitch's house-serfs, 't is true, have a rather sidelong look,—but with us in Russia one cannot distinguish the surly man from the sleepy man. Arkády Pávlitch speaks in a soft and agreeable voice, with pauses, emitting every word with pleasure, as it were, through his handsome, perfumed moustache; he also employs a great many French expressions, such as: *" Mais, c'est impayable! "—" Mais, comment donc? "*— and so forth. Nevertheless, I, for one, am not overfond of visiting him, and if it were not for the black-cock and partridges, I should, in all probability, drop his acquaintance entirely. A certain strange uneasiness takes possession of you in his house; even the comfort does not gladden you, and every time that, at evening, the curled valet presents himself before you, in his sky-blue livery with buttons stamped with a coat of arms, and begins obsequiously to pull off your boots, you feel that if, instead of his pale and lean face the wonderfully broad cheek-bones and incredibly-blunt nose of a stalwart young peasant, only just taken from the plough by his mas-

ter, but who had already contrived to burst in half a score of places, the seams of the nankeen coat recently presented to him, were suddenly to appear before you,—you would be unspeakably delighted, and would willingly subject yourself to the danger of being stripped of your boot and your leg, together, up to the very hip-joint. . . . . In spite of my dislike for Arkády Pávlitch, I once happened to pass the night with him. On the following day, early in the morning, I ordered my calash to be harnessed up, but he would not let me go without breakfast in the English fashion, and conducted me to his study. Along with tea, they served us cutlets, soft-boiled eggs, butter, honey, cheese, and so forth. Two valets, in clean white gloves, swiftly and silently anticipated our slightest wishes. We sat on a Persian divan. Arkády Pávlitch wore full trousers of silk, a black velvet round jacket, a red fez with a blue tassel, and yellow Chinese slippers, without heels. He drank tea, laughed, inspected his finger-nails, smoked, tucked pillows under his ribs, and, altogether, felt in a capital frame of mind. After having breakfasted heartily, and with evident pleasure, Arkády Pávlitch poured himself out a glass of red wine, raised it to his lips, and suddenly contracted his brows in a frown.

"Why has n't the wine been warmed?"—he asked one of the valets in a rather sharp voice.

The valet grew confused, stood stock-still, and turned pale.

"Am not I asking thee a question, my dear fellow?"—went on Arkády Pávlitch, calmly, without taking his eyes off him.

The unhappy valet shifted from foot to foot where he stood, twisted his napkin, and uttered never a word. Arkády Pávlitch lowered his head, and gazed thoughtfully askance at him.

"*Pardon, mon cher,*"—he said, with a pleasant smile, giving my knee a friendly touch with his hand, and again rivetting his eyes on the valet.—"Well, go,"—he added, after a brief silence, elevated his eyebrows, and rang the bell.

There entered a thick-set, swarthy, black-haired man, with a low forehead, and eyes completely buried in fat.

"With regard to Feódor . . . . . take measures,"—said Arkády Pávlitch in an undertone, and with entire self-possession.

"I obey, sir,"—replied the thick-set man, and left the room.

"*Voilà, mon cher, les désagréments de la campagne,*"—remarked Arkády Pávlitch, merrily. "But where are you going? stay, sit with me a while longer."

"No,"—I answered:—"I must go."

"Always hunting! Okh, I have no patience with those sportsmen! But where are you going?"

"To Ryábovo, forty versts from here."

"To Ryábovo? Akh, good heavens, in that case I will go with you. Ryábovo is only five versts from my Shipilóvka, and I have n't been to Shipilóvka for ever so long: I have never managed to make the time. Now it has happened quite opportunely: do you hunt at Ryábovo today, and come to my house in the evening. *Ce sera charmant.* We will sup together,—we will take a cook with us,—you shall spend the night with me. Splendid! splendid!"—he added, without awaiting my reply. "*C'est arrangé.* . . . Hey, who is there? Order the calash to be brought round for us, and be quick about it. You have n't been to Shipilóvka? I should be ashamed to suggest your passing the night in my agent's cottage, were it not that I know you are not fastidious, and would have to pass the night in a hay-barn at Ryábovo. . . . Come on, come on!"

And Arkády Pávlitch began to sing some French romance or other.

"But perhaps you do not know,"—he went on, rocking himself to and fro on both legs:—"my peasants there are on quit-rent. I 'm such a liberal man,—but what are you going to do about it? They pay me their dues promptly, however; I would have put them on husbandry-service long ago, I confess, but there is too little land; and I 'm amazed, as it is, how they make both ends meet. However, *c'est leur affaire.* My

agent there is a fine fellow, *une forte tête,* a statesman! You will see. . . . How conveniently this has happened, really!"

There was no help for it. Instead of setting out at ten o'clock in the morning, we set out at two. Sportsmen will understand my impatience. Arkády Pávlitch was fond, as he expressed himself, of indulging himself on occasion, and took with him such an endless mass of linen, provisions, clothing, perfumes, pillows, and various dressing-cases, that an economical and self-contained German would have thought there was enough of these blessings to last him a whole year. Every time we descended a declivity, Arkády Pávlitch made a brief but powerful speech to the coachman, from which I was able to deduce the inference, that my friend was a good deal of a coward. However, the journey was accomplished with entire safety; only on one recently-repaired bridge the cart with the cook tumbled in, and the hind wheel crushed his stomach.

Arkády Pávlitch, at the sight of the downfall of his home-bred Karem, became seriously frightened, and immediately gave orders to inquire: "Were his arms whole?" On receiving an affirmative answer, he immediately regained his composure. Nevertheless, we were a good while on the way; I rode in the same calash with Arkády Pávlitch, and toward the end of the journey I felt bored to death, the more so as in the course of

several hours my acquaintance had turned utterly insipid, and had begun to proclaim liberal views. At last, we arrived, only not at Ryábovo but directly at Shipilóvka: somehow, that was the way it turned out. Even without that, I could not have hunted my fill on that day, and therefore, possessing my soul in patience, I submitted to my fate.

The cook had arrived a few minutes in advance of us, and, evidently, had already succeeded in making his arrangements, and notifying the proper persons, for at our very entrance into the boundaries we were met by the elder (the agent's son), a stalwart and red-haired peasant, a good seven feet in height, on horseback and without his cap, in a new peasant-coat wide-open on the chest. "And where is Sofrón?"—Arkády Pávlitch asked him. The elder first sprang alertly from his horse, made an obeisance to the girdle to his master, said: "Good-morning, dear little father, Arkády Pávlitch," then raised his head, shook himself, and announced that Sofrón had gone to Peróff, but that he had already been sent for. —"Well, follow us,"—said Arkády Pávlitch. The elder led his horse aside, out of decorum, sprang on its back, and set off at a trot behind the calash, holding his cap in his hand. We drove through the village. Several peasants in empty carts met us; they were driving from the threshing-floor and singing songs, jouncing about with

their whole bodies, and with their legs dangling in the air; but at the sight of our calash and of the elder, they suddenly fell silent, doffed their winter caps (it was summer-time), and half-rose, as though awaiting orders. Arkády Pávlitch graciously saluted them. An alarming agitation had, evidently, spread abroad throughout the village. Women in plaided, home-woven wool petticoats were flinging chips at unsagacious or too zealous dogs, a lame old man with a beard which started just under his eyes jerked his half-watered horse away from the well, smote it in the ribs, for some unknown reason, and then made his obeisance. Dirty little boys, in long shirts, ran howling to the cottages, flung themselves, belly down, on the thresholds, hung their heads, kicked their legs in the air, and in this manner rolled with great agility past the door, into the dark anteroom, whence they did not again emerge. Even the chickens scuttled headlong, in an accelerated trot, under the board at the bottom of the gate; one gallant cock, with a black breast, which resembled a black-satin waistcoat, and a handsome tail, which curled over to his very comb, had intended to remain in the road, and was on the very point of crowing, but suddenly was seized with confusion, and fled also. The agent's cottage stood apart from the rest, in the middle of a thick green hemp-patch. We drew up at the gate. Mr. Pyénotchkin rose, picturesquely

flung aside his cloak, and alighted from the calash, casting courteous glances around him. The agent's wife received us with low reverences, and approached to kiss the master's hand. Arkády Pávlitch allowed her to kiss it to her heart's content, and ascended to the porch. In the anteroom, in a dark corner, stood the elder's wife, and she also bowed low, but did not venture to kiss his hand. In the so-called cold cottage,[1] on the right of the anteroom, two other women were already bustling about: they had carried thence all sorts of rubbish, empty tubs, sheepskin coats which had grown stiff as wood, butter-pots, and a cradle with a pile of rags and a gay-coloured baby, and had swept up the dirt with a bath-besom.

Arkády Pávlitch banished them from the room, and placed himself on the wall-bench, under the holy pictures. The coachmen began to bring in trunks, coffers, and other conveniences, using their utmost endeavours to subdue the clumping of their heavy boots.

In the meantime, Arkády Pávlitch was questioning the elder about the harvest, the sowing, and other agricultural subjects. The elder replied satisfactorily, but, somehow, languidly and awkwardly, as though he were buttoning his kaftan with half-frozen fingers. He stood by the

[1] A "cold" cottage, or church, in Russia means one that is not furnished with the means of heating.—TRANSLATOR.

door, and kept watching and glancing round, every now and then, making way for the alert valet. I managed to catch a glimpse, past his broad shoulders, of the agent's wife silently thrashing some other woman in the anteroom. All at once, a peasant-cart rattled up and halted in front of the porch: the agent entered.

This "statesman," acording to Arkády Pávlitch's words, was short of stature, broad-shouldered, grey-haired, and thick-set, with a red nose, small blue eyes, and a beard in the shape of a fan. We may remark, by the way, that ever since Russia has stood, there has never been an instance in it of a man who has grown corpulent and waxed wealthy, without a wide-spreading beard; a man may have worn a thin, wedge-shaped beard all his life long,—and suddenly, lo and behold, it has encircled his face like a halo,—and where does the hair come from! The agent must have been carousing in Peróff: his face was considerably bloated, and he exhaled an odour of liquor.

"Akh, you, our fathers, our gracious ones,"—he began in a sing-song tone, and with so much emotion depicted on his face, that it seemed as though the tears were on the point of gushing forth;—"at last, you have done us the favour to come to us! . . . . Thy hand, dear little father, thy dear little hand,"—he added, protruding his lips in advance.

Arkády Pávlitch complied with his wish.—"Well, now then, brother Sofrón, how are thy affairs thriving?"—he asked, in a caressing voice.

"Akh, you, our fathers,"—exclaimed Sofrón: "but how could they go badly, those affairs! For you, our fathers, our benefactors, you have deigned to illuminate our wretched little village with your coming, you have rendered us happy until the day of our coffins. Glory to Thee, O Lord, Arkády Pávlitch, glory to Thee, O Lord! Everything is thriving, thanks to your mercy. . . ."

Here Sofrón stopped short, darted a glance at his master, and, as though again carried away by a transport of feeling (and the liquor was beginning to assert itself, to boot), he again besought the privilege of kissing his hand, and went on worse than before.

"Akh, you, our fathers, our benefactors . . . . . and . . . . . what am I saying! By God, I have gone perfectly mad with joy. . . . Heaven is my witness, I look, and cannot believe my eyes. . . . . Akh, you, our fathers! . . . ."

Arkády Pávlitch glanced at me, laughed, and said: "*N'est-ce pas que c'est touchant!*"

"Yes, dear little father, Arkády Pávlitch,"—went on the indefatigable agent:—"how could you do such a thing! you afflict me to the last de-

gree, dear little father: you did not deign to notify me of your coming. And where are you to spend the night? For the dirt, the rubbish here . . . . ."

"Never mind, Sofrón, never mind,"—replied Arkády Pávlitch, with a smile:—"it 's very nice here."

"Yes, but you, our fathers,—for whom is it nice? for the likes of us peasants 't is well enough; but you . . . . akh, you, my fathers, benefactors, akh, you, my fathers! . . . Forgive me, I 'm a fool, I 've lost my wits, by God, I 've gone utterly crazy."

In the meantime, supper was served;—Arkády Pávlitch began to eat. The old man drove his son away,—"Thou wilt make the air close," said he.

"Well, old man, and hast thou settled the boundaries?"—asked Mr. Pyénotchkin, who, evidently, was desirous of imitating the peasant style of speech, and winked at me.[1]

"We have, dear little father: all by thy bounty. We signed the affidavit day before yesterday. The Khlýnoff folks were inclined to resist, at first . . . and they really did kick up a row, father. They demanded . . . . they demanded . . . . God only knows what it was they demanded; but they are a foolish lot, dear little father, a stupid set of folks. But we, dear little father, by thy

[1] He said *stariná,* instead of *starik,* for "old man."—TRANSLATOR.

mercy, showed our gratitude[1] to Mikolái Mikoláitch, the middleman; we satisfied him; we acted entirely according to thy command, dear little father; as thou wert pleased to command, so we acted, and everything was done with the knowledge of Yegór Dmítritch."

"Yegór reported to me,"—remarked Arkády Pávlitch, pompously.

"Of course, dear little father, Yegór Dmítritch did so, of course."

"Well, and I suppose you are satisfied now?"

This was all that Sofrón was waiting for.—"Akh, you, our fathers, our benefactors!"—he began to whine again. . . . "Have mercy on me! . . . . for don't we pray to the Lord God, day and night, on behalf of you, our fathers. . . . There is n't much land, of course. . . . . ."

Pyénotchkin interrupted him.—"Well, all right, all right, Sofrón; I know thou servest me zealously. . . . Well, and how about the threshing?"

Sofrón heaved a sigh.

"Well, you, our fathers, the threshing is n't very good. And here now, dear little father, Arkády Pávlitch, allow me to announce to you what sort of a little business has come up." (Here he came close up to Mr. Pyénotchkin, throwing his hands apart, bent down, and screwed up one

[1] That is—bribed.—TRANSLATOR.

eye.) "We have found a dead body on our land."

"How did that come about?"

"Why, I myself can't comprehend it, dear little father, you, our fathers,—evidently, the devil made the mess, set the snare. And, luckily, it turned out to be near another man's boundary-line; only, what 's the use of concealing the sin? 'T was on our land. I immediately gave orders to have it dragged on to the other man's strip of land,[1] while it was possible, and I set a guard over it, and gave him command: 'Hold thy tongue!' says I. And I explained it to the commissary of police, by way of precaution. 'This was the way of it,' says I; and I treated him to tea, and gratitude. . . . Now, what do you think of it, dear little father? You see, it has been left on the necks of others; for one has to pay two hundred rubles for a dead body,—as surely as one has to pay for a penny roll."

Mr. Pyénotchkin laughed a great deal at his agent's clever ruse, and said to me several times, nodding his head in his direction: *"Quel gaillard, eh?"*

In the meantime, it had grown completely dark out of doors; Arkády Pávlitch ordered the table to be cleared, and hay to be brought. The valet

[1] Endless investigations by the police, and complications, ensue from the finding of a dead body. The person who owns the land is compelled to explain how it came there, and who murdered the victim.—TRANSLATOR.

spread out sheets for us, and laid out pillows; we lay down. Sofrón went to his own quarters, after receiving his orders for the following day. Arkády Pávlitch, while getting to sleep, talked a little more about the capital qualities of the Russian peasant, and then immediately observed to me that, since Sofrón had been in charge, the Shipilóvka serfs had never been a penny in arrears. . . . . The watchman tapped on his board;[1] the baby, who, evidently, had not yet succeeded in becoming thoroughly permeated with a sense of dutiful self-sacrifice, set up a yell somewhere in the cottage. . . We fell asleep.

We rose quite early on the following morning. I was on the point of setting off for Ryábovo, but Arkády Pávlitch wished to show me his estate, and begged me to remain. I was not averse to convincing myself, by actual observation, as to the capital qualities of the statesman Sofrón. The agent presented himself. He wore a blue long-coat, girt with a red belt. He talked much less than on the preceding evening, gazed vigilantly and intently in his master's eyes, replied fluently and in business-like fashion. We went with him to the threshing-floor. Sofrón's son, the seven-foot elder, by all the tokens a very stupid fellow, also followed us, and the village scribe, Fedosyéitch, a former soldier, with a

[1] To prove that he was alert; as with the modern watchman's clock-record. Sometimes the "boards" were sheets of iron. Some such can still be seen beaten into holes in monasteries.—Translator.

huge moustache and an extremely strange expression of countenance, joined us: it seemed as though he must have beheld something remarkable very long ago, and had never recovered himself from the sight since. We inspected the threshing-floor, the barns, the grain-ricks, the sheds, the windmill, the cattle-yard, the garden-stuff, the hemp-plots; everything really was in capital order: the dejected faces of the serfs alone caused me some perplexity. In addition to the useful, Sofrón looked after the agreeable: he had planted willows along all the ditches; he had laid out paths and strewn them with sand between the ricks on the threshing-floor; he had constructed a weather-vane on the windmill, in the shape of a bear with gaping jaws, and a red tongue; he had fastened something in the nature of a Greek pediment to the brick cattle-shed, and had written in white-lead, under the pediment: "Bilt in the villige of Shipilofke in onetousan eigh Hundert farty. This catle shet."—Arkády Pávlitch melted completely, took to setting forth to me, in the French language, the advantages of the quit-rent system,—remarking, however, in that connection, that husbandry-service was more profitable for the peasants,—and any quantity of other things! He began to give the agent advice, how to plant potatoes, how to prepare the fodder for the cattle, and so forth. Sofrón listened to his master's remarks with attention, replying now

and then; but he no longer addressed Arkády Pávlitch either as "father," or as "benefactor," and kept insisting that they had very little land, that it would n't be amiss to buy some more. "Well then, buy some,"—said Arkády Pávlitch: —"I 'm not averse to having it bought in my name."—To these words, Sofrón made no reply, but merely stroked his beard.—"But it would n't be a bad idea to go to the forest now,"—remarked Mr. Pyénotchkin. Saddle-horses were immediately brought for us; we rode to the forest, or, as they say in our parts, "the forbidden ground." [1] In this "forbidden spot" we found an immense amount of thicket and game, for which Arkády Pávlitch praised Sofrón, and patted him on the shoulder. Mr. Pyénotchkin, in the matter of forestry, adhered to Russian ideas, and there, on the spot, he narrated to me what, according to his assertion, was a very amusing incident,—how a landed proprietor, given to jesting, had taught his forester a lesson, by plucking out about one-half of his beard, to demonstrate that the forest does not grow any thicker for being thinned out, ... However, in other respects, neither Sofrón nor Arkády Pávlitch avoided innovations. On our return to the village, the agent led us to in-

[1] The peasants have no right to wood from the forests, and no forest-land was allotted to them after the Emancipation. To prevent their stealing timber (as in "The Wolf," which follows), broad, deep ditches are often dug across the forest roads by the proprietors.—TRANSLATOR.

spect a winnowing-machine, which had recently been imported from Moscow. The winnowing-machine really did work well, but if Sofrón had known what an unpleasant experience was awaiting him and his master during this final stroll, he would, in all probability, have remained at home with us.

This is what happened. As we emerged from the shed, we beheld the following spectacle. A few paces from the door, beside a filthy puddle, in which three ducks were carelessly splashing, stood two serfs: one was an old man of sixty years, the other a young fellow of twenty, both in home-made, patched shirts, barefooted, and girt with ropes. The scribe, Fedosyéitch, was bustling zealously about them, and would, probably, have succeeded in prevailing upon them to withdraw, if we had tarried a little longer in the shed; but, on catching sight of us, he drew himself up in military fashion, fingers on his trousers-seams, and stood stock-still on the spot. The elder was standing there also, with mouth agape, and suspended in the act of striking fists. Arkády Pávlitch frowned, bit his lips, and stepped up to the peasants. Both bowed to his feet, in silence.

"What do you want? What are you petitioning about?"—he asked, in a stern voice, and somewhat through his nose. (The peasants glanced at each other and uttered never a word,

but merely screwed up their eyes, as though screening them from the sun, and began to breathe faster.)

"Come now, what is it?"—went on Arkády Pávlitch, and immediately turned to Sofrón:—"from what family are they?"

"From the Tobolyéeff family,"—replied the agent, slowly.

"Come now, what do you want?"—said Mr. Pyénotchkin again:—"Have n't you any tongues, pray? Tell me, thou, what dost thou want?"—he added, nodding his head at the old man.—"And don't be afraid, thou fool."

The old man stretched out his dark-brown, wrinkled neck, opened awry his lips, which had turned blue, ejaculated in a hoarse voice: "Intercede, sir!" and again banged his brow against the ground. The young serf also bowed low. Arkády Pávlitch gazed pompously at the napes of their necks, tossed back his head, and straddled his legs somewhat.—"What 's the matter? Against whom are you complaining?"

"Have mercy, sir! Give us a chance to breathe. . . . . We are tortured to death." (The old man spoke with difficulty.)

"Who has tortured thee?"

"Why, Sofrón Yakóvlevitch, dear little father."

Arkády Pávlitch said nothing for a while.

"What 's thy name?"

"Antíp, dear little father."

"And who is this?"

"My son, dear little father."

Arkády Pávlitch again remained silent for a while, and twitched his moustache.

"Well, and how does he torture thee?"—he began again, glancing at the old man through his moustache.

"Dear little father, he has utterly ruined us. He has given two of my sons as recruits out of their turn, dear little father, and now he is taking away the third one. Yesterday, dear little father, he took my last poor cow from my yard, and thrashed my wife—that's his lordship yonder." (He pointed at the elder.)

"H'm,"—ejaculated Arkády Pávlitch.

"Do not let him utterly ruin me, my benefactor!"

Mr. Pyénotchkin frowned.—"What's the meaning of this?"—he asked the agent in an undertone and with a look of displeasure.

"He's a drunkard, *sir,*"—replied the agent, for the first time employing the "sir":—"he won't work. He's always in arrears, these last five years, sir."

"Sofrón Yakóvlevitch has paid up my arrears for me, dear little father,"—went on the old man:—"this is the fifth year that he has paid, and how has he paid—he has made me his serf, dear little father, and so . . . . ."

"And how didst thou come to be in arrears?" asked Mr. Pyénotchkin, menacingly. (The old man hung his head.)—"Thou art fond of getting drunk, I think,—of roaming around among the dram-shops?" (The old man tried to open his mouth.)

"I know you,"—went on Arkády Pávlitch, with vehemence:—"your business is drinking and lying on the oven; and a good peasant must be responsible for you."

"And he 's an insolent beast, too," the agent interjected into the gentleman's speech.

"Well, that one understands as a matter of course. That is always the case: I have observed it more than once. He leads a dissolute life for a whole year, is insolent, and now flings himself at my feet."

"Dear little father, Arkády Pávlitch,"—said the old man in despair:—"have mercy, defend us,—I 'm not insolent! I speak as I would before the Lord God, 't is more than I can bear. Sofrón Yakóvlevitch has taken a dislike to me,—as for the reason why he has taken the dislike, the Lord be his judge! He is ruining me utterly, dear little father. . . . This is my last son, here . . . . and you see . . . . ." (A tear glittered in the old man's yellow, wrinkled eyes.)—"Have mercy, sir, defend us." . . . . . .

"Yes, and not us alone—" began the young serf. . . . . .

All at once, Arkády Pávlitch flared up:

"And who asked thee, hey? when thou art not asked, hold thy tongue. . . . What 's the meaning of this? Hold thy tongue, I tell thee! Hold thy tongue! . . . . . Akh, my God! why, this is simply mutiny! No, brother, I would n't advise any one to mutiny on my estate. . . I have . . . . ." (Arkády Pávlitch began to stride back and forth, then, probably, recalled to himself my presence, turned away, and put his hands in his pockets.) . . . . . "*Je vous vous demande bien pardon, mon cher,*"—he said, with a constrained smile, significantly lowering his voice.—"*C'est le mauvais côté de la médaille.* . . . Come, very good, very good,"—he went on, without looking at the peasant men:—"I will give orders . . . good, go your way."—(The peasants did not rise.)—"Well, have n't I told you? . . . it 's all right. Go away,—I 'll give orders, I tell you."

Arkády Pávlitch turned his back on them.—"Eternal dissatisfaction,"—he said between his teeth, and walked off homeward with huge strides. Sofrón followed him. The scribe's eyes bulged out, as though he were on the point of making a long leap in some direction. The elder scared the ducks out of the puddle. The petitioners stood a while longer on the same spot, stared at each other, and trudged away whence they came.

A couple of hours later, I was in Ryábovo, and, in company with Anpadíst, a peasant of my acquaintance, was preparing to set off hunt-

ing. Pyénotchkin had sulked at Sofrón up to the very moment of my departure. I began to talk with Anpadíst about the Shipilóvka serfs, about Mr. Pyénotchkin; I asked him, whether he knew the agent there.

"Sofrón Yakóvlevitch, you mean? . . . . Oh, don't I just!"

"And what sort of a man is he?"

"He 's a dog, and not a man: you won't find such another dog this side of Kursk."

"But what dost thou mean?"

"Why, Shipilóvka merely stands in the name of . . . . how do you call him? Pyénkin; he does n't own it, you see: Sofrón owns it."

"You don't say so?"

"He runs it as his own property. The peasants are up to their ears in debt to him: they drudge for him like hired men: he sends one off with the carrier's train, another somewhere else . . . . . he harries them altogether."

"They have not much land, it seems?"

"Not much? He hires eighty desyatínas from the Khlínovo folks alone, and from us, one hundred and twenty; there 's a whole hundred and fifty desyatínas there besides for you. And land is not the only thing he trades in: he trades in horses, and cattle, and tar, and butter, and flax, and a lot of things besides. . . . He 's clever, awfully clever, and rich too, the beast! But this is the bad part of it—he assaults folks.

He 's a wild beast, not a man;—I 've said it: he 's a dog, a dirty dog, that 's what he is—a dirty dog."

" But why don't the people complain of him? "

" Eksta! What does the master care! What is it to him, so long as the money is not in arrears? Yes, just try it,"—he added, after a brief pause: —" complain. No, he 'll let thee . . . well, just try it . . . No, he 'll give you to understand . . ." I mentioned Antíp, and related what I had seen.

" Well,"—said Anpadíst:—" now he 'll devour him alive; he 'll devour that man utterly. Now the elder will beat him. The poor, unhappy fellow, just think of it! And why is he suffering? . . . He picked a quarrel with him at the village-council,—with that agent,—things had got beyond endurance, you see. . . A great matter, forsooth! So then he began to peck at him,—at Antíp, I mean. Now he 'll make an end of him. For he 's such a dirty dog, a hound,—the Lord forgive my sin!—he knows whom to oppress. The old men,—he does n't touch those that are richer,—and with large families, the bald-headed devil,—but now he 'll let himself loose! You see, he gave Antíp's sons for recruits out of their turn,—the cruel rascal, the dirty dog,—may the Lord forgive my great sin! "

We set off on our hunt.

Salzburg in Silesia, July, 1847.

XI

THE COUNTING-HOUSE

It happened in the autumn. I had been roving about for several hours over the fields, with my gun; and, in all probability, would not have returned before the evening to the posting-station on the Kursk highway, where my tróïka was waiting for me, had not the extremely fine and cold, drizzling rain, which had been sticking to me ever since the morning, indefatigably and pitilessly, like an old maid, made me, at last, seek a temporary shelter, at least, somewhere in the vicinity. While I was deliberating in which direction to go, a low-roofed hut suddenly presented itself to my eyes, beside a field sown with peas. I went to the hut, cast a glance under the straw penthouse, and beheld an old man so decrepit, that he immediately reminded me of that dying goat which Robinson Crusoe found in one of the caves of his island. The old man was squatting on his heels, puckering up his purblind, tiny eyes, and hurriedly but cautiously, like a hare (the poor fellow had not a single tooth), chewing a hard, dry pea, incessantly rolling it from side to side. He was so engrossed in his occupation, that he did not notice my approach.

"Grandpa! Hey there, grandpa!"—I said.

He ceased chewing, elevated his eyebrows and, with an effort, opened his eyes.

"What?"—he mumbled in a hoarse voice.

"Where is there a village near at hand?"—I asked.

The old man set to chewing again. He had not heard me. I repeated my question more loudly than before.

"A village? . . . . but what dost thou want?"

"Why, to shelter myself from this rain."

"What?"

"To shelter myself from the rain."

"Yes!" (He scratched his sunburned neck.) "Well, thou must go, seest thou,"—he began suddenly, flourishing his hands loosely:—"yo . . . yonder, right past the little wood, thou must go, —yonder, as thou goest—there 'll be a road; do thou let it—the road, that is—alone, and keep on always to the right, keep right on, keep right on, keep right on. . . . . Well, and then thou wilt come to Anányevo. Or thou canst go through to Sítovko."

It was with difficulty that I understood the old man. His moustache interfered with him, and his tongue obeyed him badly.

"But whence comest thou?"—I asked him.

"What?"

"Whence art thou?"

"From Anányevo."

"What art thou doing here?"

"What?"

"What art thou doing here?"

"I 'm the watchman."

"But what art thou guarding?"

"Why, the peas."

I could not help bursting into a laugh.

"Why, good gracious,—how old art thou?"

"God knows."

"Thy sight is bad, is n't it?"

"Yes. There are times when I hear nothing."

"Then, how canst thou act as watchman, pray?"

"My elders know."

"Thy elders," I thought, and surveyed the poor old man, not without compassion. He fumbled about his person, got a crust of stale bread from his bosom, and began to suck at it, like a child, drawing in with an effort his cheeks, which were sunken enough without that.

I walked off in the direction of the wood, turned to the right, kept on and on, as the old man had advised me, and at last reached a large village with a stone church in the new style, that is to say, with columns, and a spacious manor-house, also with columns. Already from afar, athwart the close network of the rain, I had observed a cottage with a board roof, and two chimneys taller than the others,—in all probability,

the dwelling of the elder,—and thither I directed my steps, in the hope of finding in his house a samovár, tea, sugar, and cream which was not completely sour. Accompanied by my thoroughly benumbed dog, I ascended the porch, entered the anteroom, and opened the door; but, instead of the customary appliances of a cottage, I beheld several tables loaded down with papers, two red cupboards spattered with ink, a leaden sand-box weighing about a pud, very long pens, and so forth. At one of the tables sat a young fellow of twenty years, with a puffy and sickly face, tiny little eyes, a greasy forehead, and interminable curls on his temples. He was dressed, as was proper, in a grey nankeen kaftan shiny on the collar and the stomach.

"What do you want?"—he asked me, throwing his head upward, like a horse which has not been expecting to be seized by the muzzle.

"Does the manager live here . . . . . or . . . . ."

"This is the squire's principal counting-house,"—he interrupted me.—"I 'm the clerk on duty. . . . Do you mean to say you did n't see the sign? That 's what the sign is nailed up for."

"And where can I dry myself? Has any one in the village a samovár?"

"Why should n't there be a samovár?"—retorted the young fellow in the grey kaftan, pompously: "Go to Father Timoféi, or to the cot-

tage of the house-serfs, or to Názár Tarásitch, or to Agraféna the poultry-woman."

"Who 's that thou art talking to, thou dolt? thou wilt not let one sleep, dolt!"—rang out a voice from the adjoining room.

"Why, here 's some gentleman or other has come in, and is asking where he can dry himself."

"What gentleman is it?"

"I don't know. He has a dog and a gun."

A bed creaked in the adjoining room. The door opened, and there entered a man about fifty years of age, low of stature, squat, with a bull-neck, protruding eyes, remarkably round cheeks, and a polish all over his face.

"What do you want?"—he asked me.

"To dry myself."

"This is not the place for that."

"I did not know that this was a counting-house; moreover, I am ready to pay . . . . ."

"You might do it here,"—returned the fat man:—"please to come this way." (He conducted me into another room, only not the one from which he had emerged.)—"Shall you be comfortable here?"

"Yes. . . . But cannot I get some tea with cream?"

"Certainly, directly. In the meantime, please to undress yourself and rest, and the tea shall be ready immediately."

"Whose estate is this?"

"The estate of Mme. Losnyakóff, Eléna Nikoláevna."

He left the room. I looked about me: along the partition which separated my room from the counting-house stood a huge, leather-covered divan; two chairs, also upholstered in leather, with extremely high backs, reared themselves in the air, one on each side of the single window, which opened on the street. On the walls, hung with dark-green paper with pink patterns, were three enormous pictures, painted in oils. One depicted a setter hound with a blue collar and the inscription: "This is my delight;" at the dog's feet flowed a river, and on the opposite shore of the river, beneath a pine-tree, sat a hare of extravagant size, with ears pricked up. In the other picture, two old men were eating watermelon: beyond the watermelon, in the distance, a Greek portico was visible bearing the inscription: "The Temple of Contentment." The third picture presented a half-naked woman in a reclining attitude, *en raccourci,* with red knees and very thick heels. My dog, without the slightest delay, with superhuman effort, crawled under the divan, and apparently found a great deal of dust there, for he began to sneeze frightfully. I walked to the window. Across the street, from the manor-house to the counting-house of the estate, in a diagonal line, lay boards: a very useful precaution, because everywhere

around, thanks to our black soil, and to the prolonged rain, the mud was frightful. Round about the squire's residence, which stood with its back to the street, that was going on which usually does go on around the manors of the gentry: maids in faded cotton frocks were whisking to and fro; house-serfs were strolling through the mud, halting and meditatively scratching their spines, the rural policeman's horse, which was tied, was idly swishing its tail, and, with its muzzle tossed aloft, was nibbling the fence; hens were cackling; consumptive turkeys were incessantly calling to one another. On the porch of a dark and rotting building, probably the bath-house, sat a sturdy young fellow with a guitar, singing, not without spirit, the familiar ballad:

> " E—I 'll to the desert hie myself away
> From these most lovely scenes "—

and so forth.[1]

The fat man entered my room.

" Here, they 're bringing your tea,"—he said to me, with a pleasant smile.

The young fellow in the grey kaftan, the clerk on duty, set out on an old l'ombre table the samovár, the tea-pot, a glass with a cracked saucer, a pot of cream, and a bundle of Bolkhóff ring-rolls as hard as stone. The fat man withdrew.

[1] The man's atrocious pronunciation cannot be reproduced in English.—TRANSLATOR.

"Who is that,"—I asked the clerk on duty:—"the manager?"

"Oh, no, sir; he used to be the head cashier, but now he has been promoted to be the head office-clerk."

"But have you no manager here?"

"No, sir, none. There 's a peasant overseer, Mikhaílo Vikúloff, but there 's no manager."

"So there 's an agent?"

"Certainly, there is: a German, Lindamandol, Kárlo Kárlitch;—only he does n't manage affairs."

"But who does the managing?"

"The mistress herself."

"You don't say so!—And have you a large force in the office?"

The young fellow reflected.

"Six men."

"Who are they?"—I asked.

"Why, these:—first, there 's Vasíly Nikoláevitch, the head cashier; and next, Piótr the clerk; Piótr's brother Iván, a clerk; another clerk, Iván; Koskenkín [1] Narkízoff, also a clerk; and myself;—and you could n't reckon up all."

"Your mistress has a great many menials, I suppose?"

"No, not so very many. . . ."

"But how many?"

[1] Konstantín.—Translator.

"They sum up to about a hundred and fifty persons, probably."

We both remained silent for a while.

"Well, and dost thou write well?"—I began again.

The young fellow grinned to the full capacity of his mouth, nodded his head, went into the office, and brought back a written sheet of paper.

"This is my writing,"—said he, without ceasing to grin.

I looked at it: on a quarter-sheet of greyish paper, the following was written in a large, handsome script:

"ORDINANCE"

"From the head home office of the Ánányevo estate, to the Overseer Mikhaílo Vikúloff, No. 209."

"Thou art ordered, immediately on receipt of this, to institute an inquiry: who it was that, during the past night, in a state of intoxication and with improper songs, walked through the English park, and waked up and disturbed the French governess, Mme. Engenie? and what the watchman was about, and who was on guard in the park and permitted such disorder? Thou art ordered to report without delay to the office concerning the aforesaid, in full detail.

"Head clerk, Nikolái Khvostóff."

A huge seal, bearing a coat of arms, was attached to the ordinance, with the inscription: "Seal of the head office of the Anányevo estate;" and below was the signature: "To be executed punctually: Eléna Losnyakóff."

"Did the mistress herself sign that, pray?"—I asked.

"Certainly, sir, she herself: she always signs herself. Otherwise, the order cannot take effect."

"Well, and shall you send this ordinance to the overseer?"

"No, sir. He will come himself and read it. That is to say, it will be read to him; for he can't read and write." (The clerk on duty lapsed into silence again.)

"Well, sir,"—he added, smilingly:—"it 's well written, is n't it, sir?"

"Yes."

"Of course, I did n't compose it. Koskenkín is a master-hand at that."

"What? . . . . . Dost thou mean to say that with you the orders are first composed?"

"How else, sir? They cannot be written out fairly straight off."

"And how much of a salary dost thou receive?"—I asked.

"Thirty-five rubles a year, and five rubles for boots."

"And art thou satisfied?"

"Certainly I am.—Not every one can get into

our counting-house. God himself ordered me there, to tell the truth: my uncle serves as butler."

"And art thou well off?"

"Yes, sir. To tell the truth,"—he went on, with a sigh:—"the likes of us are better off with the merchants. Fellows like me are very well off with the merchants. Now, for instance, yesterday there came to us a merchant from Venyóvo,—so his workman told me. . . . They 're well off, there 's no denying it,—well off."

"But do the merchants give bigger wages?"

"God forbid! Why, a merchant would pitch you out of doors by the scruff of the neck if you were to ask wages from him. No, you must live in faith and in fear with a merchant. He gives you food, and drink, and clothing, and everything. If you please him,—he 'll give you even more. . . . What do you want with wages! you don't need any at all. . . . And the merchant lives simply in Russian fashion, in our own fashion: if you go on the road with him, he drinks tea, and you drink tea; what he eats, that you eat also. A merchant . . . . why, there 's no comparison: a merchant is not the same as a well-born master. A merchant is n't capricious; now, if he gets angry, he 'll thrash you, and that 's the end of it. He does n't nag and jeer. . . . But with the well-born master,—woe be to you! Nothing suits him: this is not right, and he is n't satisfied

with the other. If you give him a glass of water or food,—'Akh, the water stinks! akh, the food stinks!' You carry it away, and stand outside the door a bit, and carry it in again:—'Well, now, that 's good; well, now, that does n't stink.' And the lady mistresses, I can just tell you, the lady mistresses! . . . or, take the young ladies! . . . . ."

The clerk on duty briskly left the room. I finished my glass of tea, lay down on the divan, and fell asleep. I slept two hours.

On waking, I tried to rise, but indolence overpowered me; I closed my eyes, but did not get to sleep again. A low-voiced conversation was in progress in the office, on the other side of the partition. I involuntarily began to listen.

"Yis, sir, yis, sir, Nikolái Eremyéitch,"—said one voice:—"yis, sir. That cannot be taken into account, sir; it really can't. . . . H'm!" (The speaker coughed.)

"Pray believe me, Gavríla Antónitch,"—returned the fat man's voice:—"judge for yourself, whether I don't know the course of affairs here."

"Who else should know it, Nikolái Eremyéitch: you are the first person here, sir, one may say. Well, and how is it to be, sir;"—pursued the voice which was unfamiliar to me:—"what shall we decide on, Nikolái Eremyéitch?—permit me to inquire."

"What shall we decide on, Gavríla Antónitch? The matter depends on you, so to speak: you don't care about it, apparently."

"Good gracious, Nikolái Eremyéitch: what are you saying? I 'm a merchant, a merchant; my business is to buy. That 's what we merchants stand on, Nikolái Eremyéitch,—I may say."

"Eight rubles,"—said the fat man, pausing between his words.

A sigh was audible.

"Nikolái Eremyéitch, you are pleased to demand an awful lot."

"I can't do otherwise, Gavríla Antónitch,—'t is impossible,—I speak as in the presence of the Lord God."

A silence ensued.

I raised myself softly on my elbow, and peered through a crack in the partition. The fat man was sitting with his back toward me. Facing him, sat a merchant, about forty years old, gaunt and pale, as though smeared with fasting butter.[1] He kept incessantly running his fingers through his beard, blinking his eyes very rapidly, and twitching his lips.

"The crops are wonderfully fine this year, sir,"—he began again:—"all the time I have

[1] That is, with oil, butter being forbidden during the Great Fast (Lent), because it is an animal product. The wealthy replace it with costly nut-oils; the poor, with sunflower-seed and other strong, coarse oils.—Translator.

been driving I have been admiring them. Beginning with Vorónezh, they are splendid, first-class, sir, I may say."

"The crops really are n't bad,"—replied the head of the counting-house: "but, surely, you know, Gavríla Antónitch, that the autumn gives good promise, but 't will be as the spring wills."

"That 's a fact, Nikolái Eremyéitch: everything is according to God's will; you have deigned to speak the exact truth. . . . . But I think your visitor has waked up, sir."

The fat man turned round . . . . and listened.

"No, he 's asleep. However, possibly you know . . . . ."

He stepped to the door.

"No, he 's asleep,"—he repeated, and returned to his place.

"Well, and how is it to be, Nikolái Eremyéitch?"—began the merchant again:—"we really must close the bargain. . . . Let it go at that then, Nikolái Eremyéitch, let it go at that,"—he went on, winking uninterruptedly: "two grey bank-notes and one white note for your grace, and yonder—" (he nodded his head in the direction of the manor-house) "—six rubles and a half. Shall we strike hands on it?"

"Four grey notes," [1]—replied the clerk.

[1] The (old-time) grey bank-note was for two rubles; the white, one ruble.—TRANSLATOR.

" Come, three."

" Four grey without the white."

" Three, Nikolái Eremyéitch."

" Three and a half, not a kopék less."

" Three, Nikolái Eremyéitch."

" Don't even mention such a thing, Gavríla Antónitch."

" What a pig-headed fellow!"—muttered the merchant.—" I think I 'd better settle the matter myself with the lady.'"

" As you like,"—replied the fat man:—" you ought to have done it long ago. Really, what 's the use of bothering yourself? . . 'T is much better so!"

" Come, enough! Stop that, Nikolái Eremyéitch. Why, he flies into a rage on the instant! I was only saying that, you know, to hear myself talk."

" No, really now . . . ."

" Have done, I tell you. . . . I was joking, I tell you. Come, take three and a half,—what can one do with you?"

" I ought to take four, but, like a fool, I have been too hasty,"—muttered the fat man.

" So, yonder, at the house, six and a half, sir, Nikolái Eremyéitch,—the grain is sold for six and a half?"

" Six and a half, yes, you 've already been told."

" Well, then, strike hands on the bargain, Nikolái Eremyéitch—" (the merchant smote the

clerk's palm with his outspread fingers) "—and God bless us!" (The merchant rose.)—"So now I 'll be off to the lady mistress, dear little father, Nikolái Eremyéitch, and order them to announce me, and I 'll say: 'Nikolái Eremyéitch has settled on six and a half, ma'am.'"

"Say just that, Gavríla Antónitch."

"And now, please to accept."

The merchant handed over to the clerk a small bundle of paper-money, made his bow, shook his head, took up his hat with two fingers, twitched his shoulders, imparted to his figure an undulating motion, and left the room, his boots squeaking decorously. Nikolái Eremyéitch walked to the wall, and, so far as I could observe, began to sort over the money which the merchant had given him. A red head with thick side-whiskers thrust itself in at the door.

"Well, how are things?"—inquired the head: —"Is everything as it should be?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

The fat man waved his hand with vexation, and pointed toward my room.

"Ah, very good!" returned the head, and vanished.

The fat man went to the table, sat down, opened a book, got out his abacus,[1] and began to

[1] The merchants still use the counting-frame, rattling the colored balls on the wires to and fro with marvellous rapidity, and thus performing the most intricate calculations, instead of using paper and pencil.—TRANSLATOR.

deduct and add the bone balls, using for the purpose not his forefinger, but the third finger of his right hand, which is more decorous.

The clerk on duty entered.

"What dost thou want?"

"Sidór has arrived from Goloplyók."

"Ah! well, call him in. Stay, stay. . . . . Go first, and see whether that strange gentleman in there is still asleep, or whether he has waked up."

The clerk on duty cautiously entered my room. I laid my head on my game-bag, which served me in lieu of a pillow, and shut my eyes.

"He 's asleep,"—whispered the office-boy, returning to the office.

The fat man emitted a growl between his teeth.

"Well, summon Sidór,"—he said at last.

Again I raised myself on my elbow. There entered a peasant of huge stature, about thirty years of age, healthy, rosy-cheeked, with light, chestnut hair, and a small, curly beard. He prayed before the holy pictures, bowed to the head clerk, took his cap in both hands, and straightened himself up.

"Good-day, Sidór,"—said the fat man, rattling his counting-frame.

"Good . . day, Nikolái Eremyéitch."

"Well, and how 's the road?"

"Good, Nikolái Eremyéitch. A trifle mud-

dy." (The peasant spoke neither fast nor loudly.)

"Is thy wife well?"

"What should ail her! She 's all right."

The peasant heaved a sigh, and thrust out his leg. Nikolái Eremyéitch stuck his pen behind his ear, and blew his nose.

"Well, and why hast thou come?"—he went on with his questions, stuffing his checked handkerchief into his pocket.

"Why, we 've heard, Nikolái Eremyéitch, that carpenters are required from us."

"Well, what of that—are n't there any among you, I 'd like to know?"

"Of course there are, Nikolái Eremyéitch: ours is a forest hamlet,—you know well. But 't is our working season, Nikolái Eremyéitch."

"Your working season! That 's precisely the point: you 're fond enough of working for other folks, but you don't like to work for your own mistress. . . . It amounts to the same thing!"

"The work is the same, in fact, Nikolái Eremyéitch . . . . but . . . ."

"Well?"

"The pay is . . . you know . . . . awfully . . ."

"As if it was n't enough for you! Just see, how spoiled you are! Get out with you!"

"Yes, and I want to say, Nikolái Eremyéitch, there 's only work enough for a week, but we shall be detained a month. First the material

gives out, and then we 'll be sent into the garden to clean the paths.'"

"A pretty reason! The mistress herself has deigned to command, and 't is not for me and thee to make any argument."

Sidór said nothing for a while, and began to shift from foot to foot.

Nikolái Eremyéitch twisted his head on one side, and rattled the reckoning-beads vigorously.

"Our . . . . peasants . . . . Nikolái Eremyéitch . . . . ." began Sidór at last, stammering over every word:—"have ordered me to give your grace . . . and here—there are . . . ." (He thrust his huge hand into the breast of his long coat, and began to draw thence a folded towel with red patterns.)

"What dost thou mean, what dost thou mean, fool? hast thou gone crazy, pray?"—the fat man hastily interrupted him.—"Go, go to me in my cottage,"—he continued, almost pushing out the astounded peasant;—"ask there for my wife . . . . she 'll give thee some tea; I 'll be there directly. Go thy way! Pray, hast not thou been told to go?"

Sidór left the room.

"What a . . . . . bear!"—muttered the head clerk after him, shook his head, and began again on his reckoning-frame.

Suddenly shouts of: "Kupryá! Kupryá! you can't upset Kupryá!"—resounded on the street

and on the porch, and a little later there entered the office a man of low stature, consumptive in appearance, with a remarkably long nose, large, impassive eyes, and a very haughty mien. He was clad in a tattered old great-coat, Adelaïda colour,—or, as it is called among us, ' oddeloida,' —with a velveteen collar and tiny buttons. He carried a fagot of firewood on his shoulders. Five house-serfs crowded around him, and all were shouting, " Kupryá! you can't upset Kupryá! Kupryá has been appointed to be stove-tender! " But the man in the great-coat with the velveteen collar paid not the slightest attention to the turbulence of his companions, and never changed countenance. With measured steps he walked to the stove, flung down his burden, rose, pulled a snuff-box from his rear pocket, opened his eyes wide, and began to stuff his nose with powdered melilot mixed with ashes.

When the noisy horde entered, the fat man was on the point of frowning, and half-rose from his seat; but on seeing what the matter was, he smiled, and merely ordered them not to shout: " There 's a sportsman asleep in the next room," —said he.

" What sportsman? "—asked a couple of the men, with one accord.

" A landed proprietor."

" Ah! "

" Let them go on with their row,"—said the

man with the velveteen collar, flinging wide his arms:—" what do I care! if only they don't touch me. I have been appointed to be the stove-tender!"

" The stove-tender! the stove-tender!"—joyously chimed in the crowd.

" The mistress ordered it,"—he went on, shrugging his shoulders:—" but just you wait . . . . you 'll be appointed swineherds yet. But that I have been a tailor, and a good tailor, and learned my business in the best workshops in Moscow, and sewed for ' Enerals,' is something that nobody can take away from me. But what are you putting on big airs about? . . . what? you are sluggards, drones, nothing more. If they were to set me free, I should n't die of hunger, I should n't go to destruction; give me a passport,—and I 'll pay in a good quit-rent, and satisfy the masters. But how about you? You 'd perish, perish like flies, and that 's all about it!"

" Thou hast lied,"—interrupted a pockmarked young fellow with white eyebrows and lashes, a red neckerchief, and ragged elbows:—" thou hast had a passport, and the masters never saw a kopék of quit-rent from thee, and thou hast never earned a penny for thyself: thou hadst all thou could do to drag thy legs home, and ever since that time thou hast lived in one wretched kaftan."

" And what is one to do, Konstantín Narkí-

zitch!"—retorted Kupriyán:—"if a man has fallen in love, and perished and gone to ruin? Do thou first go through my experience, Konstantín Narkízitch, and then thou mayest condemn me."

"And a pretty person thou didst choose to fall in love with! a regular monster!"

"No, don't say that, Konstantín Narkízitch."

"But to whom art thou making that assertion? Why, I've seen her myself; last year, in Moscow, I saw her with my own eyes."

"Last year she really had gone off a bit in her looks,"—remarked Kupriyán.

"No, gentlemen, see here,"—interposed, in a scornful and negligent voice, a tall man, with a face sprinkled with pimples, and all curled and oiled,—probably the valet:—"here now, suppose we let Kupriyán Afanásitch sing his little song. Come on, begin, Kupriyán Afanásitch!"

"Yes, yes!"—chorused the others.—"Hey, there, Alexandra! thou hast caught Kupryá! there's no denying it. . . . Sing away, Kupryá! —Gallant lad, Alexandra!" (House-serfs, by way of showing greater tenderness, frequently use the feminine terminations in speaking of a man.)—"Pipe up!"

"This is not the place to sing,"—retorted Kupryá, firmly:—"this is the gentry's counting-house."

"But what business is that of thine? I do be-

lieve thou art aiming at becoming head of the office thyself!"—replied Konstantín, with a coarse laugh.—" It must be so!"

" Everything is in the power of the mistress," —remarked the poor fellow.

" See, see what he 's aiming at! See there, what sort of a fellow he is! Phew! phew! ah!"

And all burst into violent laughter, and some even jumped. The one who laughed loudest of all was a wretched lad of fifteen, probably the son of an aristocrat among the house-serfs; he wore a waistcoat with bronze buttons, a neck-cloth of a lilac hue, and had already succeeded in acquiring a portly belly.

" Hearken now, Kupryá, confess,"—began Nikolái Eremyéitch, in a self-satisfied way, visibly in a sweat and affected:—" 't is a bad thing to be the stove-tender? Is n't it now? a trifling business, altogether, I fancy?"

" And what of that, Nikolái Eremyéitch,"— remarked Kupriyán:—" here you are now our head clerk, 't is true; there 's no disputing that, it 's a fact; but you were under the ban once, and lived in a peasant's hut yourself too."

" Just look out for thyself, don't forget thyself before me,"—the fat man interrupted snappishly:—" they 're jesting with thee, fool; thou should feel it, and be grateful, fool, that they bother themselves about thee, fool."

"It just slipped off my tongue, Nikolái Eremyéitch, pardon me. . . ."

"Just so, 't was a slip of the tongue."

The door flew wide open, and a page ran in.

"Nikolái Eremyéitch, the mistress summons you to her presence."

"Who is with the mistress?"—he asked the page.

"Aksínya Nikítishna and a merchant from Venyóvo."

"I 'll be there in a minute. And as for you, brothers,"—he went on, in a persuasive voice:—"you 'd better take yourself away from here, with the newly appointed stove-tender: nobody knows when the German may drop in, and he 'll complain on the spot."

The fat man smoothed his hair, coughed into his hand almost entirely covered by his coat-sleeve, hooked up his coat, and wended his way to the mistress, straddling his legs far apart as he walked. After waiting a while, the whole horde followed him, including Kupryá. My old acquaintance, the clerk on duty, was left alone. He started to clean a pen, but fell asleep where he sat. Several flies immediately took advantage of the fortunate opportunity, and stuck themselves around his mouth. A mosquito alighted on his forehead, planted its little legs in regular order, and slowly plunged its whole sting into his soft body. The former red-head

with side-whiskers made its appearance again from behind the door, stared and stared, and entered the office with its decidedly ugly body.

"Fediúshka! Hey, Fediúshka! thou art eternally asleep!"—said the head cashier.

The clerk on duty opened his eyes, and rose from his chair.

"Has Nikolái Eremyéitch gone to the mistress?"

"He has, Vasíly Nikoláitch."

"Ah! ah!"—thought I:—"'t is he, the head cashier!"

The head cashier began to walk about the room. However, he stole about, rather than walked, and, altogether, bore a strong resemblance to a cat. From his shoulders depended an old, black dress-coat, with very narrow tails; he kept one hand on his breast, and with the other kept constantly clutching at his tall, tight stock of horsehair, and twisting his head in a strained way. He wore goatskin boots, and trod very softly.

"Squire Yagúshkin was asking for you today,"—added the clerk on duty.

"H'm,—was he? What did he say?"

"He said that he was going to Tiutiúrevo this evening, and would expect you. 'I must have a talk with Vasíly Nikoláitch about a certain matter,' says he,—but what the business was, he did n't mention: 'Vasíly Nikoláitch will know,' says he.

"H'm!"—returned the head cashier, and went to the window.

"Is Nikolái Eremyéitch in the office?"—rang out a loud voice in the anteroom, and a tall man, evidently in a rage, with an irregular, but bold and expressive face, and quite neatly dressed, strode over the threshold.

"Is n't he here?"—he asked, casting a swift glance around.

"Nikolái Eremyéitch is with the mistress,"—replied the cashier.—"Tell me what you want, Pável Andréitch: you can tell me. . . . What do you wish?"

"What do I want? You wish to know what I want?" (The cashier nodded his head in a sickly way.)—"I want to teach him a lesson, the fat-bellied wretch, the vile tale-bearing slanderer. . . I 'll teach him to tell tales!"

Pável flung himself on a chair.

"What do you mean, what do you mean, Pável Andréitch? Calm yourself. . . . . Are n't you ashamed? Don't you forget of whom you are speaking, Pável Andréitch!"—stammered the cashier.

"Of whom I 'm speaking? And what do I care, that he has been appointed head clerk! A pretty one they have picked out for the appointment, I must say! They 've actually let the goat into the vegetable-garden, one may say!"

"That will do, that will do, Pável Andréitch, that will do! stop that . . . what nonsense!"

"Well, Lísa Patríkyevna,[1] go wag thy tail and fawn! . . . I 'll wait for him,"—said Pável, angrily, and banged his hand down on the table. —"Ah, yonder he comes,"—he added, glancing out of the window:—"talk of the devil. . . . You are welcome!" (He rose.)

Nikolái Eremyéitch entered the office. His face was beaming with satisfaction, but at the sight of Pável he grew somewhat embarrassed.

"Good day, Nikolái Eremyéitch,"—said Pável, significantly, as he moved slowly toward him:—"good day."

The head clerk made no reply. The merchant's face made its appearance in the doorway.

"Why don't you deign to answer me?"—went on Pável.—"But, no . . . . no,"—he added:—"that 's not the point; nothing is to be gained by shouting and abuse. No, you 'd better tell me amicably, Nikolái Eremyéitch, why do you persecute me? why do you want to ruin me? Come, speak, speak."

"This is not the place to give you an explanation,"—replied the head clerk, not without agitation:—"and this is not the proper time. Only, I must confess that one thing amazes me: whence have you derived the idea that I want to ruin you, or that I am persecuting you? And how, in short, can I persecute you? You are not in my office."

[1] The Russian equivalent of "Reynard the Fox."—Translator.

"I should think not,"—replied Pável:—"that is the last straw! But why do you dissimulate, Nikolái Eremyéitch?—You understand me, you see."

"No, I don't understand you."

"Yes, you do."

"No,—by God, I don't!"

"And he swears into the bargain! Well, then, if it has come to that, tell me: come, you 're not afraid of God! Well, why can't you let the poor girl alone? What do you want of her?"

"Of whom are you speaking, Pável Andréitch?"—asked the fat man, with feigned amazement.

"Eka! you don't know, I suppose? I 'm speaking of Tatyána. Have the fear of God before your eyes—what are you avenging yourself for? Shame on you: you are a married man, you have children as old as I am. But I mean nothing else than . . . . . I want to marry: I am acting honourably."

"How am I to blame in the matter, Pável Andréitch? Our mistress will not allow you to marry: 't is her ladyship's will! What have I to do with that?"

"What have you to do with it? and have n't you and that old witch, the housekeeper, entered into collusion, I 'd like to know? Are n't you a calumniator, I 'd like to know, hey! Tell me, are n't you accusing an innocent young girl of

all sorts of fictitious things? It is n't thanks to your gracious offices, I suppose, that she has been appointed dish-washer instead of laundress? And they don't beat her, and keep her clad in striped ticking, by your grace? . . . Shame on you, shame on you, you old man! The first you know, you 'll be smitten with paralysis. . . . You will have to answer to God."

"Curse away, Pável Andréitch, curse away. . . . . You won't have a chance to curse long!"

Pável flared up.

"What? Hast thou taken it into thy head to threaten me?"—he began angrily.—"Dost think that I fear thee? No, brother, thou hast got hold of the wrong man! what have I to fear? . . . . I can earn my bread anywhere. . But thou—that 's another matter! Thou canst do nothing but dwell here, and slander, and steal. . . ."

"Just see how conceited he is!"—the clerk interrupted him, beginning to lose patience:—"a medical man, a plain medical man, an ordinary little peasant-surgeon; and just listen to him,—whew, what an important personage!"

"Yes, I am a peasant-surgeon, and were it not for that, your gracious person would now be rotting in the cemetery. . . . And 't was the Evil One who prompted me to cure him,"—he added, between his teeth.

"Thou didst cure me? . . . . No, thou didst

try to poison me; thou didst give me a potion of aloes,"—put in the clerk.

"And what if nothing but aloes would take effect on thee?"

"Aloes are prohibited by the medical authorities,"—went on Nikolái:—"I can enter a complaint about thee yet. . . . Thou didst try to murder me—that 's what! But the Lord did not permit."

"That will do, that will do, gentlemen,"—the cashier tried to speak. . . .

"Stop that!"—shouted the clerk.—"He tried to poison me! Dost thou understand that?"

"Much I care! . . . . Hearken to me, Nikolái Eremyéitch,"—said Pável in desperation:—"For the last time I entreat thee . . . . thou hast forced me to it—my patience is exhausted. Leave us in peace, dost thou understand? otherwise, by God, 't will be the worse for some one of you, I tell thee."

The fat man flew into a rage.

"I 'm not afraid of thee,"—he yelled:—"dost hear me, booby! I mastered thy father, I broke his horns for him,—let that be a warning for thee, look out!"

"Don't remind me of my father, Nikolái Eremyéitch, don't remind me of him!"

"Get out! I don't take any orders from thee!"

"Don't remind me of him, I tell thee!"

"And I tell thee, don't forget thyself. . . . As the mistress does not need thee in thy line, if she had to choose between us two, thou wouldst not be the winner, my dear little dove! No one is permitted to mutiny, look out!" (Pável was quivering with rage.)—"And the girl Tatyána is getting what she deserves. . . . Just wait, and she 'll get something worse."

Pável darted forward with upraised arms, and the clerk rolled heavily to the floor.

"Handcuff him, handcuff him!"—moaned Nikolái Eremyéitch. . . .

I will not undertake to describe the end of this scene. I am afraid I have wounded the sensibilities of the reader as it is.

I returned home the same day. A week later, I learned that Mme. Losnyakóff had retained both Pável and Nikolái in her service, but had banished the girl Tatyána; evidently, she was not wanted.

XII

THE WOLF

I WAS driving from the chase one evening alone in a racing-drozhky.[1] I was eight versts from my house; my good mare was stepping briskly along the dusty road, snorting and twitching her ears from time to time; my weary dog never quitted the hind wheels, as though he had been tied there. A thunder-storm was coming on. In front of me a huge, purplish cloud was slowly rising from behind the forest; overhead, and advancing to meet me, floated long, grey clouds; the willows were rustling and whispering with apprehension. The stifling heat suddenly gave way to a damp chill; the shadows swiftly thickened. I slapped the reins on the horse's back, descended into a ravine, crossed a dry brook all overgrown with scrub-willows, ascended a hillock, and drove into the forest. The road in front of me wound along amid thick clumps of hazel-bushes, and was already inundated with gloom; I advanced with difficulty. My drozhky

[1] The racing-drozhky, which is also much used in the country, consists of a plank attached (without springs) to four small wheels. The driver sits astride of the plank, with his feet on the shafts.—TRANSLATOR.

jolted over the firm roots of the centenarian oaks and lindens, which incessantly intersected the long, deep ruts—the traces of cart-wheels; my horse began to stumble. A strong wind suddenly began to drone aloft, the trees grew turbulent, big drops of rain pattered sharply and splashed on the leaves, the lightning and thunder burst forth, the rain poured in torrents. I drove on at a foot-pace and was speedily compelled to halt; my horse had stuck fast. I could not see a single object. I sheltered myself, after a fashion, under a wide-spreading bush. Bent double, with my face wrapped up, I was patiently awaiting the end of the storm, when, suddenly, by the gleam of a lightning flash, it seemed to me that I descried a tall figure on the road. I began to gaze attentively in that direction—the same figure sprang out of the earth, as it were, by my side.

"Who is this?"—asked a sonorous voice.

"Who are you yourself?"

"I'm the forester here."

I mentioned my name.

"Ah, I know; you are on your way home?"

"Yes; but you see what a storm . . . ."

"Yes, it is a thunder-storm,"—replied the voice. A white flash of lightning illuminated the forester from head to foot; a short, crashing peal of thunder resounded immediately afterward. The rain poured down with redoubled force.

"It will not pass over very soon,"—continued the forester.

"What is to be done?"

"I 'll conduct you to my cottage, if you like,"—he said abruptly.

"Pray do."

"Please take your seat."

He stepped to the mare's head, took her by the bridle, and turned her from the spot. We set out. I clung to the cushion of the drozhky, which rocked like a skiff at sea, and called my dog. My poor mare splashed her hoofs heavily through the mire, slipping and stumbling: the forester swayed to right and left in front of the shafts, like a spectre. Thus we proceeded for quite a long time. At last my guide came to a halt.—"Here we are at home, master,"—he said, in a calm voice. A wicket-gate squeaked, several puppies began to bark in unison. I raised my head and by the glare of the lightning I descried a tiny hut, in the centre of a spacious yard, surrounded with a wattled hedge.[1] From one tiny window, a small light cast a dull gleam. The forester led the horse up to the porch, and knocked at the door. "Right away! Right away!"—resounded a shrill little voice, and a patter of bare feet became audible, the bolt

[1] In central and southern Russia, where timber is scarce, long boughs of trees are plaited into picturesque hedges, to replace board fences. Farm buildings frequently have their walls of the same wattled work.—TRANSLATOR.

screeched, and a little girl about twelve years of age, clad in a miserable little smock, girt about with a bit of list, and holding a lantern in her hand, made her appearance on the threshold.

"Light the gentleman,"—he said to her:—"and I will put his carriage under the shed."

The little lass glanced at me, and entered the cottage. I followed her. The forester's cottage consisted of a single room, smoke-begrimed, low-ceiled, and bare, without any sleeping-shelf over the oven, and without any partitions; a tattered sheepskin coat hung against the wall. On the wall-bench lay a single-barrelled gun; in one corner trailed a heap of rags; two large pots stood beside the oven. A pine-knot was burning on the table, sputtering mournfully, and was on the point of going out. Exactly in the middle of the room hung a cradle, suspended from the end of a long pole.[1] The little maid extinguished the lantern, seated herself on a tiny bench, and began to rock the cradle with her left hand, while with her right she put the pine-knot in order. I looked about, and my heart grew sad: it is not cheerful to enter a peasant's hut by

[1] A stout, long, supple sapling is fixed firmly against one wall. The tip is in the middle of the room, and from it is suspended the cradle, which depresses it, and acts as a natural spring. The cradle may be (like Peter the Great's, which is in the museum of the Kremlin in Moscow) of strong linen, distended by poles at the ends, hammock-fashion; or even of a splint basket. It is often rocked from a distance by means of a rope attached to one of the angle-cords.—TRANSLATOR.

night. The baby in the cradle was breathing heavily and rapidly.

"Is it possible that thou art alone here?"—I asked the little girl.

"Yes,"—she articulated, almost inaudibly.

"Art thou the forester's daughter?"

"Yes,"—she whispered.

The door creaked, and the forester stepped across the threshold, bending his head as he did so. He picked up the lantern from the floor, went to the table, and ignited the wick.

"Probably you are not accustomed to a pine-knot,"—he said, tossing back his curls.

I looked at him. Rarely has it been my fortune to behold such a fine, dashing fellow. He was tall of stature, broad-shouldered, and splendidly built. From beneath his dripping shirt, which was open on the breast, his mighty muscles stood forth prominently. A curly black beard covered half of his surly and manly face; from beneath his broad eyebrows, which met over his nose, small brown eyes gazed gallantly forth. He set his hands lightly on his hips, and stood before me.

I thanked him, and asked his name.

"My name is Fomá" (Thomas), he replied —"but my nickname is 'The Wolf.'"[1]

"Ah, are you The Wolf?"

[1] In the Government of Orel, a solitary, surly man is called a wolf *(biriúk)*.

I gazed at him with redoubled interest. From my Ermolái and from others I had often heard about the forester—The Wolf, whom all the peasants round about feared like fire. According to their assertions, never before had there existed in the world such a master of his craft. "He gives no one a chance to carry off trusses of brushwood, no matter what the hour may be; even at midnight he drops down on you like snow on your head, and you need not think of offering resistance—he 's as strong and as crafty as the devil. . . . And it 's impossible to catch him by any means whatever; neither with liquor, nor with money; he won't yield to any allurement. More than once good men have made preparations to put him out of the world; but no, he does n't give them a chance."

That was the way the neighbouring peasants expressed themselves about The Wolf.

"So thou art The Wolf,"—I repeated.—"I 've heard of thee, brother. They say that thou givest no quarter to any one."

He pulled his axe from his girdle, sat down on the floor, and began to chop a pine-knot.

"Hast thou no housewife?"—I asked him.

"No,"—he replied, and brandished his axe fiercely.

"She is dead, apparently."

"No—yes—she is dead,"—he added, and turned away.

I said nothing; he raised his eyes, and looked at me.

"She ran away with a petty burgher who came along,"—he remarked, with a harsh smile. The little girl dropped her eyes; the baby waked up, and began to cry; the girl went to the cradle. —"There, give him that,"—said The Wolf, thrusting into her hand a dirty horn.[1]—"And she abandoned him,"—he went on, in a low tone, pointing at the baby. He walked to the door, and turned round.

"Probably, master,"—he said,—"you cannot eat our bread; and I have nothing but bread."

"I am not hungry."

"Well, suit yourself. I would boil the samovár for you, only I have no tea. . . I 'll go and see how your horse is getting along."

He went out and slammed the door. I surveyed my surroundings. The hut seemed to me more doleful than before. The bitter odour of chilled smoke oppressed my breathing. The little girl did not stir from her place, and did not raise her eyes; from time to time, she gave the cradle a gentle shove, or timidly hitched up on her shoulder her smock, which had slipped down; her bare legs hung motionless.

"What is thy name?"—I asked.

[1] The Russian peasants use a cow's horn, with a cow's teat tied over the tip, as a nursing-bottle. The dried teats are for sale in the common street-markets.—TRANSLATOR.

"Ulíta,"—she said, drooping her sad little face still lower than before. The forester entered, and seated himself on the wall-bench.

"The thunder-storm is passing over,"—he remarked, after a brief silence;—"if you command, I will guide you out of the forest."

I rose. The Wolf picked up his gun, and inspected the priming.

"What is that for?"—I inquired.

"They are stealing in the forest. They 're felling a tree at the Hare's Ravine,"—he added, in reply to my glance of inquiry.

"Can it be heard from here?"

"It can from the yard."

We went out together. The rain had ceased. Heavy masses of cloud were piled up in the distance, long streaks of lightning flashed forth from time to time; but over our heads the dark-blue sky was visible; here and there, little stars twinkled through the thin, swiftly-flying clouds. The outlines of the trees, besprinkled with rain and fluttered by the wind, were beginning to stand forth from the gloom. We began to listen. The forester took off his cap, and dropped his eyes. "The—there," he said suddenly, and stretched out his arm;—"you see what a night they have chosen."

I heard nothing save the rustling of the leaves. The Wolf led my horse out from under the shed. —"But I shall probably let him slip, as matters

stand,"—he added aloud.—" I 'll go with thee, may I? "—" All right,"—he replied, and backed the horse.—" We 'll catch him in a trice, and then I 'll guide you out. Come on! "

We set off, The Wolf in advance, I behind him. God knows how he found the road, but he rarely halted, and then only to listen to the sound of the axe.—" You see,"—he muttered between his teeth.—" You hear? do you hear? "—" But where? "—The Wolf shrugged his shoulders. We descended into a ravine, the wind died down for an instant, measured blows distinctly reached my ear. The Wolf glanced at me, and shook his head. On we went, over the wet ferns and nettles. A dull, prolonged roar rang out.....

" He has felled it,"—muttered The Wolf.

In the meantime the sky had continued to clear; it was almost light in the forest. We made our way out of the ravine at last.—" Wait here,"—whispered the forester to me, crouched down, and raising his gun aloft, vanished among the bushes. I began to listen with strained intentness. Athwart the constant noise of the wind, I thought I discerned faint sounds not far away: an axe was cautiously hewing branches, a horse was neighing.

" Where art thou going? Halt! "—the iron voice of The Wolf suddenly thundered out. Another voice shrieked plaintively, after the fashion of a hare. . . . . A struggle began.—" Thou

li-iest, thou li-iest,"—The Wolf kept repeating, panting the while; "thou shalt not escape."—I dashed forward in the direction of the noise, and ran to the scene of battle, stumbling at every step. Beside the felled tree on the ground, the forester was tumbling about: he held the thief beneath him, and was engaged in binding the man's hands behind his back with his girdle. I stepped up. The Wolf rose, and set him on his feet. I beheld a peasant, soaked through, in rags, with a long, dishevelled beard. A miserable little nag, half-covered with a small, stiff mat, stood hard by, with the running-gear of a peasant-cart. The forester uttered not a word; the peasant, also, maintained silence, and merely shook his head.

"Let him go,"—I whispered in The Wolf's ear.—"I will pay for the tree."

The Wolf, without replying, grasped the horse's foretop with his left hand; with his right he held the thief by the girdle.—"Come, move on, booby!"—he ejaculated surlily.

"Take my axe yonder,"—muttered the peasant.—"Why should it be wasted?"—said the forester, and picked up the axe. We started. I walked in the rear. . . . . The rain began to descend again in a drizzle, and soon was pouring in torrents. With difficulty we made our way to the cottage. The Wolf turned the captured nag loose in the yard, led the peasant into the

house, loosened the knot of the girdle, and seated him in one corner. The little girl, who had almost fallen asleep by the oven, sprang up, and began to stare at us in dumb affright. I seated myself on the wall-bench.

"Ekh, what a downpour!"—remarked the forester.—"We must wait until it stops. Would n't you like to lie down?"

"Thanks."

"I would lock him up in the lumber-room, on account of your grace,"—he went on, pointing at the peasant,—"but, you see, the bolt . . . . ."

"Leave him there,—don't touch him,"—I interrupted The Wolf.

The peasant darted a sidelong glance at me. I inwardly registered a vow that I would save the poor fellow at any cost. He sat motionless on the wall-bench. By the light of the lantern I was able to scrutinise his dissipated, wrinkled face, his pendent, yellow eyebrows, his thin limbs. . . . The little girl lay down on the floor, at his very feet, and fell asleep again. The Wolf sat by the table, with his head propped on his hand. A grasshopper was chirping in one corner. . . . The rain beat down upon the roof, and dripped down the windows; we all maintained silence.

"Fomá Kúzmitch,"—began the peasant, suddenly, in a dull, cracked voice:—"hey, there, Fomá Kúzmitch!"

"What dost thou want?"

"Let me go."

The Wolf made no reply.

"Let me go. . . . . Hunger drove me to it. . . . . Let me go."

"I know you,"—retorted the forester, grimly. "You 're all alike in your village,—a pack of thieves."

"Let me go,"—repeated the peasant.—"The manager . . . . we 're ruined, that 's what it is . . . . . let me go!"

"Ruined! . . . . No one ought to steal!"

"Let me go, Fomá Kúzmitch . . . . . don't destroy me. Thy master, as thou knowest, will devour me, so he will."

The Wolf turned away. The peasant was twitching all over, as though racked with fever. He kept shaking his head, and his breath came irregularly.

"Let me go,"—he repeated, with mournful desperation.—"Let me go, for God's sake, let me go! I 'll pay, that I will, God is my witness. As God is my witness, hunger drove me to it . . . . . the children were squalling, thou knowest how it is thyself. 'T is hard on a man, that it is."

"All the same, don't go a-thieving."

"My horse,"—went on the peasant,—"there 's my horse, take it if thou wilt . . . . . 't is my only beast . . . . . let me go!"

"Impossible, I tell thee. I, also, am a subordinate; I shall be held responsible. And it is n't right, either, to connive at thy deed."

"Let me go! Poverty, Fomá Kúzmitch, poverty, that 's what 's the trouble . . . . . let me go!"

"I know thee!"

"But do let me go!"

"Eh, what 's the use of arguing with thee; sit still, or I 'll give it to thee, understand? Dost thou not see the gentleman?"

The poor fellow dropped his eyes. . . . . The Wolf yawned, and laid his head on the table. The rain had not stopped. I waited to see what would happen.

The peasant suddenly straightened himself up. His eyes began to blaze, and the colour flew to his face.—"Well, go ahead, devour! Go ahead, oppress! Go ahead!"—he began, screwing up his eyes, and dropping the corners of his lips:—"Go ahead, damned murderer of the soul, drink Christian blood, drink!"

The forester turned round.

"I 'm talking to thee,—to thee, Asiatic, blood-drinker,—to thee!"

"Art drunk, that thou hast taken it into thy head to curse!"—said the forester in amazement.—"Hast thou gone crazy?"

"Drunk! . . . . It was n't on thy money, thou damned soul-murderer, thou wild beast, beast, beast!"

"Akh, thou . . . . I 'll give it to thee!"

"What do I care? 'T is all one to me—I shall perish anyway; what can I do without a horse? Kill me—it comes to the same thing; whether with hunger, or thus, it makes no difference. Let everything go to destruction: wife, children, —let them all perish. . . . But just wait, thou shalt hear from us!"

The Wolf half-rose to his feet.

"Kill, kill,"—the peasant began again, in a savage voice: "Kill, go ahead, kill. . . . ." (The little girl sprang hastily from the floor, and riveted her eyes on him.)—"Kill, kill!"

"Hold thy tongue!"—thundered the forester, and advanced a couple of strides.

"Enough, that will do, Fomá Kúzmitch,"—I shouted:—"let him alone. . . . Don't bother with him. . . ."

"I won't hold my tongue,"—went on the unfortunate man.—"It makes no difference how he murders me. Thou soul-murderer, thou wild beast, hanging is too good for thee. . . . . But just wait a bit. . . Thou hast not long to vaunt thyself! They 'll strangle thy throat for thee. Just wait a bit!"

The Wolf seized him by the shoulder. . . I rushed to the rescue of the peasant.

"Don't touch us, master!"—the forester yelled at me.

I did not fear his threats, and was on the point

of stretching forth my arm when, to my extreme amazement, with one twist of the hand, he tore the girdle from the peasant's elbows, grasped him by the collar, banged his cap down over his eyes, flung open the door, and thrust him out.

"Take thyself and thy horse off to the devil!" —he shouted after him:—"and look out, another time I 'll . . . ."

He came back into the cottage, and began to poke about in the corner.

"Well, Wolf,"—I said at last;—"thou hast astonished me. I see that thou art a splendid young fellow."

"Ekh, stop that, master,"—he interrupted me, with vexation.—"Only, please don't tell about it. Now I 'd better show you your way," —he added;—"because you can't wait for the rain to stop."

The wheels of the peasant's cart rumbled through the yard.

"You see, he has dragged himself off,"—he muttered;—"but I 'll give it to him!"

Half an hour later he bade me farewell on the edge of the forest.

XIII

TWO LANDED PROPRIETORS

I HAVE already had the honour of introducing to you, my indulgent readers, several of my gentlemen neighbours; permit me now, therefore, by the way (for us writers everything is "by the way"), to make you acquainted with two more landed proprietors, on whose property I have often hunted, extremely worthy, well-intentioned individuals, who enjoy the universal respect of several counties.

I will first describe to you retired Major-General Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch Khvalýnsky. Picture to yourselves a tall man, finely proportioned in days gone by, but now somewhat pot-bellied, though not in the least decrepit, not even aged, a man of mature years, in the very prime of life, as the expression is. His once regular and still agreeable features have changed somewhat, 't is true; his cheeks have grown pendent in jowls, numerous radiating wrinkles have clustered round his eyes, some teeth are already missing, as Saadi said, according to Púshkin's statement; his light-chestnut hair—all that is left of it, at least—has turned lilac, thanks to a preparation bought at the Romný horse-fair

from a Jew who gave himself out as being an Armenian; but Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch steps out alertly, has a ringing laugh, clanks his spurs, twirls his moustache, calls himself, in short, an old cavalryman, while it is a well-known fact that real old men never call themselves old men. He generally wears a surtout buttoned up to the throat, a tall stock with a starched collar, and trousers of a speckled grey, of military cut; and he wears his hat straight on his forehead, leaving the whole back of his head outside. He is a very kind-hearted man, but with decidedly peculiar ideas and habits. For example: he is utterly unable to treat noblemen who are not wealthy nor of official rank as his equals. In talking with them, he generally gazes at them askance, with his cheek leaning heavily on his firm, white collar, or he will suddenly take and illumine them with a clear, impassive stare, maintain silence, and wriggle the whole of his skin on his head under his hair; he even pronounces his words in a different way, and does not say, for instance: "Thanks, Pável Vasílitch," or: "Please come hither, Mikhaílo Ivánitch," but: "T'anks, Páll 'Asílich," or: "Pe-ease come hither, Mikhal' 'Vánitch." And he behaves in a still stranger manner to people who stand on the lower rungs of the society ladder: he does not look at them at all, and before announcing his wishes to them, or giving them an order, he repeats several times in suc-

cession, with a preoccupied and dreamy aspect: "*What*'s thy name? . . . *What*'s thy name?"—generally with a remarkably sharp emphasis on the first word, "what," and uttering the rest very rapidly, which imparts to his whole mode of speech a pretty close likeness to the cry of the male quail. He is a frightfully fussy man, and a skinflint, and a bad farmer: he has taken to himself as manager a retired quartermaster, a Little Russian, a remarkably stupid man. However, in the matter of estate management, no one in our parts has, so far, outdone a certain important Petersburg official, who, on perceiving from his overseer's report that grain-kilns on his estate were subject to frequent conflagrations, which caused the loss of much grain, issued stringent orders that, henceforth, no sheaves were to be placed in the kiln until the fire was completely extinguished. This same dignitary once took it into his head to sow all his fields with poppies, in consequence of what was, apparently, an extremely simple calculation. "Poppies are more expensive than rye," said he: "therefore, it will be more profitable to plant poppies." And he also commanded his peasant women to wear kokóshniki [1] made after a pattern

[1] The *kokóshnik* is the round, coronet-shaped head-dress of the peasant women. It varies in shape and appellation in different districts, *kokóshnik* being the generic name. The *kíka* is tall and pointed in front, like the mitre of a Roman or an Anglican bishop. —TRANSLATOR.

sent from Petersburg; and, as a matter of fact, to this day the peasant women on his estates wear the round-coronet head-dress . . . . . only, it runs up to a sharp point at the front, like a kíka. . . . . But let us return to Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch. Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch is terribly fond of the fair sex, and, just as soon as he catches sight of a pretty person on the boulevard of his county town, he instantly sets out in pursuit of her, but also immediately takes to limping —which is a noteworthy circumstance. He is fond of playing cards, but only with persons of a lower class; they say to him, "Your Excellency," and he can chide them and scold them to his heart's content. But when he chances to play with the Governor, or with some official personage, a wonderful change takes place in him: he smiles, and nods his head, and stares with all his eyes,—he is fairly redolent of honey. . . . . He even loses without complaint. Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch reads little, and while he is reading he keeps his moustache and his brows in incessant motion, as though a wave were flowing over his face, from below upward. Especially noteworthy is this undulating movement on Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch's face, when he happens (in the presence of visitors, of course) to run through the columns of the *Journal des Débats*. He plays quite an important part at the elections, but declines the honourable post of Marshal of

the Nobility out of parsimony.—" Gentlemen," —he generally says to the nobles who approach him, and he says it in a voice filled with patronage and independence:—" I am greatly obliged for the honour; but I have decided to devote my leisure to solitude."—And, having uttered these words, he turns his head several times to right and left, and then, with dignity, drops his chin and his cheeks on his neckerchief. In his youth, he served as adjutant to some distinguished person, whom he never mentions otherwise than by his baptismal name and patronymic; 't is said, that he took upon himself not alone the duties of an adjutant,—that, for instance, donning his full parade-uniform, and even fastening the hooks, he steamed his superior in the bath—but one cannot believe every rumour. Moreover, General Khvalýnsky is not fond of referring to his career in the service, which is, on the whole, rather odd; it appears, also, that he has not been to war. General Khvalýnsky lives in a small house, alone; he has never experienced conjugal bliss in his life, and therefore, to this day, he is regarded as a marriageable man, and even a good catch. On the other hand, his housekeeper, a woman of three-and-thirty years, black-eyed, black-browed, plump, fresh, and with a moustache, wears starched gowns on week-days, and puts on muslin sleeves of a Sunday.[1] Vyátcheslaff

[1] " Sleeves," in central and southern Russia, means the chemise, of which the *full sleeves* and the guimpe-like neck portion are

Ilariónovitch is happy at great, formal dinners, given by landed proprietors in honour of governors and other powers that be: then he is, so to speak, thoroughly in his element. On such occasions he sits, if not at the right hand of the Governor, at least not very far from him; at the beginning of the banquet, he is generally engaged in maintaining the sense of his own dignity, and throwing himself back in his chair, but not turning his head, he drops a sidelong look upon the round napes and standing collars of the guests; on the other hand, toward the end of the dinner, he cheers up, begins to smile on all sides (he has been smiling in the direction of the Governor from the very beginning of the feast), and sometimes even proposes a toast in honour of the fair sex, "the ornament of our planet," as he phrases it. General Khvalýnsky also makes a far from bad appearance at all solemn and public sessions, examinations, assemblies, and exhibitions; and he is, moreover, a master-hand at approaching an ecclesiastical dignitary and receiving his blessing.[1] Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch's people do not shout and create an uproar when they meet another carriage at the cross-roads or ferries, and in other similar circumstances; on

visible above the *sarafán,* or full frock. The *sarafán* itself has no sleeves, and its upper edge passes under the arms, from which narrow straps pass over the shoulders.—Translator.

[1] Considerable art and practice are required to receive a bishop's hand properly and gracefully, on the upturned palms, held in boat-shape, raise it reverently to the lips, and kiss it, in return for the cross of blessing bestowed.—Translator.

the contrary, when pushing people aside, or calling the carriage, they say, in an agreeable guttural baritone voice: "Pray, pray, allow General Khvalýnsky to pass through," or: "General Khvalýnsky's equipage." . . . . Khvalýnsky's equipage is, truth to tell, of rather ancient fashion; his lackeys' liveries are decidedly threadbare (that they are grey, with trimmings of red braid, it is hardly necessary to mention);[1] the horses, also, are somewhat aged, and have seen hard service; but Vyátcheslaff Ilariónovitch makes no pretensions to foppishness, and does not even consider it becoming to his rank to throw dust in the eyes of the public. Khvalýnsky is not endowed with any special gift of language, or, perhaps, he has no opportunity to display his eloquence, because he not only will not tolerate discussion, but even rejoinder in general, and sedulously avoids all long conversations, particularly with young persons. 'T is safer, in fact; otherwise, with the present generation of men, a calamity might befall: they might immediately become insubordinate and lose their reverence. In the presence of persons of superior rank, Khvalýnsky maintains silence, in the majority of cases, but to persons of a lower rank, whom, evidently, he despises, but with whom alone he consorts, he makes abrupt and harsh speeches,

[1] The regular prerogative of a general: the cape-coats are trimmed with rows of scarlet braid.—TRANSLATOR.

incessantly employing expressions such as the following: "But what you are saying is nonsense;" or: "I find myself compelled, in short, m' dea' si', to call to your attention," or: "But, after all, you ought to know with whom you are dealing," and so forth. He is especially dreaded by postmasters, permanent justices of the peace, and station superintendents. He never invites any one to his own house, and lives, so says rumour, after the fashion of a miser. Notwithstanding all which, he is a very fine landed proprietor,—"an ex-soldier, a disinterested man, with principles, *vieux grognard,*" his neighbours say of him. One governmental procurator permits himself to smile when General Khvalýnsky's excellent and solid qualities are referred to in his presence,—but what will not envy do! . . . . . .

However, let us pass on to the other landed proprietor.

Mardáry Apollónitch Stegunóff does not resemble Khvalýnsky in any respect. 'T is not likely that he was ever in the service anywhere, and he never has regarded himself as a beauty. Mardáry Apollónitch is a short, plump, bald old gentleman, with a double chin and a good-sized paunch. He is very hospitable and fond of jesting; he lives, as the saying is, at his ease; winter and summer he goes about in a wadded striped dressing-gown. In one point only does he agree

with General Khvalýnsky: he, also, is a bachelor. He has five hundred souls.[1] Mardáry Apollónitch busies himself with his estate in a pretty superficial manner; ten years ago he purchased from Butenop, in Moscow,—in order not to be behind his age,—a threshing-machine, locked it up in a barn, and relapsed into contentment. Occasionally, on a fine summer's day, he will order his racing-drozhky to be harnessed up, and will drive to the fields to take a look at the grain and to pluck corn-flowers. Mardáry Apollónitch lives thoroughly in the ancient fashion. And his house, also, is of ancient construction: the anteroom, as is fitting, reeks of kvas, tallow candles, and leather; there, also, on the right, is a buffet, with smoke-pipes[2] and towels; in the dining-room are family portraits, flies, a huge pot of geranium, and a jingling piano; in the drawing-room are three couches, three tables, two mirrors, and a hoarse clock with carved hands of blackened enamel and bronze; in the study are a table with papers, a screen of bluish hue with small pictures pasted on it which have been cut from various publications of the last century, a cupboard filled with stinking books, spiders, and black dust, a fat arm-chair, an Italian window, a nailed-up door leading to the garden. . . . .

[1] That is, male serfs. The women were not included in the Revision Lists.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] For preparing the samovár: the pipes, leading to the outer air, being attached to the samovár at need.—TRANSLATOR.

In a word, everything is as it should be. Mardáry Apollónitch has a multitude of domestics, and all are garbed in ancient fashion: in long, blue kaftans, with tall collars, trousers of a muddy colour, and short, yellowish waistcoats. They address visitors as: "Dear little father." His farming operations are presided over by a peasant bailiff, who has a beard that spreads all over his sheepskin coat; his house, by a wrinkled and stingy old woman, with her head enveloped in a light-brown kerchief. In Mardáry Apollónitch's stables stand thirty horses, of varied quality; he drives out in a home-made calash, weighing one hundred and fifty puds.[1] He receives visitors very cordially, and entertains them gloriously,—that is to say, thanks to the stupefying properties of Russian cookery, he deprives them of all possibility of occupying themselves with anything but preference until close on nightfall. But he himself never occupies himself with anything whatsoever, and has even ceased to peruse the "Dream-book." But there are still a good many landed proprietors of that sort, among us in Russia—the question is: To what end have I begun to speak about him, and why? . . . . So now, permit me, in lieu of a reply, to tell you the story of one of my visits to Mardáry Apollónitch.

I arrived at his house in summer, about seven

[1] A pud is a little over thirty-six pounds.—Translator.

o'clock in the evening. The Vigil service had just ended,[1] and the priest, evidently a very timid young man, who had not been long out of the theological seminary, was sitting in the drawing-room, near the door, on the very edge of a chair. Mardáry Apollónitch received me very affectionately, according to his wont: he sincerely rejoiced over every guest, and, in general, he was a very kind-hearted man. The priest rose, and picked up his hat.

"Wait, wait, bátiushka,"[2] said Mardáry Apollónitch, without releasing my hand.—"Don't go. . I have ordered them to bring thee some vódka."

"I don't drink, sir,"—murmured the priest in confusion, and flushed scarlet to his very ears.

"What nonsense!"—replied Mardáry Apollónitch:—"Míshka! Yúshka! vódka for the bátiushka!"

Yúshka, a tall, thin old man of eighty years, entered with a wine-glass of vódka on a dark-painted tray variegated with spots of flesh-colour.

The priest began to refuse.

[1] The All-Night Vigil, consisting of Vespers (or Compline) and Matins, which is obligatory before the celebration of the morning Liturgy, may be read in an unconsecrated building, even by a layman, and is not infrequently requested by the devout.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] "Dear little father": the form of address for ecclesiastics, in particular.—TRANSLATOR.

"Drink, bátiushka, don't put on airs, it is n't nice,"—remarked the squire, reprovingly.

The poor young man obeyed.

"Well, now thou mayest go, bátiushka."

The priest began to bow his farewell.

"Come, very good, very good, go along. . . . A very fine man,"—went on Mardáry Apollónitch, glancing after him:—"I 'm very well satisfied with him, only—he 's young yet. But how about you, my dear fellow?[1] . . . . How are you? what have you been doing with yourself? Let 's go out on the balcony—just see what a magnificent evening it is."

We went out on the balcony, sat down, and began to chat. Mardáry Apollónitch glanced down, and suddenly became frightfully agitated.

"Whose hens are those? whose hens are those?"—he began to shout:—"whose hens are those running in the garden? . . . . Yúshka! Yúshka! go, find out instantly whose hens those are running in the garden!—Whose hens are those? How many times have I forbidden it—how many times have I spoken about that?"

Off rushed Yúshka.

"What disorder!" Mardáry Apollónitch kept reiterating:—"'t is frightful!"

The unlucky hens, as I now recall the circumstances, two speckled and one white with a crest,

[1] *Bátiushka*, in addressing social equals, has this sense.—Translator.

continued to stalk about very quietly under the apple-trees, now and then giving vent to their feelings by a prolonged cackling, when suddenly Yúshka, hatless and stick in hand, and three other adult house-serfs, all fell upon them energetically and in unison. The fun began. The hens shrieked, flapped their wings, cackled deafeningly; the house-serfs rushed about, stumbled, and fell; the master, from the balcony, yelled like a fanatic: "Catch, catch, catch, catch them! catch, catch, catch them! . . . Whose hens are those—whose hens are those?"

At last, one of the men succeeded in seizing the crested hen and squeezing her throat to the ground, and, at the same moment, over the hedge of the garden leaped a little girl of eleven years, all dishevelled and with a switch in her hand.

"Hey, so that 's the owner of the hens!" exclaimed the squire, triumphantly:—"Ermíl the coachman's hens! There, he has sent his Natálka to drive them home—I wonder why he did n't send Parásha,"—added the squire in an undertone, and grinned significantly.—"Hey, Yúshka! drop those hens: catch Natálka for me."

But before the panting Yúshka could overtake the frightened little maid, the housekeeper made her appearance from somewhere or other, grasped her by the arm, and slapped her several times on the back.

"That 's right, that 's right,"—chimed in the squire,—"te, te, te! te, te, te!—But take the hens away from her, Avdótya,"—he added in a loud voice, and, turning to me with a radiant countenance:—"What a hunt, was n't it, my dear fellow, hey?—Just look, I 'm all in a perspiration."

And Mardáry Apollónitch burst out laughing.

We remained on the balcony. The evening really was extremely fine.

Tea was served.

"Pray tell me,"—I began,—"Mardáry Apollónitch: are those your homesteads transplanted over yonder, on the highway, beyond the ravine?"

"Yes—why?"

"How could you do such a thing, Mardáry Apollónitch? Why, that 's a sin. The peasants have been assigned to wretched, cramped little huts; there is n't a single tree to be seen all around; there 's not even a pond; there is only one well, and that is good for nothing. Is it possible that you could find no other spot?—And 't is said that you have even deprived them of their old hemp-patches?"

"But what is one to do with the boundary-survey?" replied Mardáry Apollónitch. "This is where the survey sits with me." (He pointed to the nape of his neck.) "And I foresee no profit whatever from that survey. And as for

my having deprived them of their hemp-patches and ponds, or not having dug any there,—why, my dear fellow, I know my own business. I 'm a simple man,—I proceed in the good old way. In my opinion, if one is a gentleman—why, let him be a gentleman; if he 's a peasant—then let him be a peasant.—So there you have it."

Of course, it was impossible to make any answer to such a clear and convincing evasion.

"And besides,"—he went on:—"they are bad, disgraced peasants. There are two families there, in particular: my late father, even,—God grant him the kingdom of heaven!—did not favour them, was very far from favouring them. And I take this as a sign, I must tell you: if the father is a thief, the son is a thief also; you may say what you like—oh, blood, blood is a great thing!"

In the meantime the air had become perfectly quiet. Only now and then did the breeze blow in gusts, and, as it died down, for the last time, around the house, it wafted to our ears measured blows which followed one another quickly, resounding from the direction of the stables. Mardáry Apollónitch had only just raised his saucer of tea to his lips, and was already inflating his nostrils, without which, as every one knows, not a single genuine primitive Russian imbibes tea, —but he paused, listened, nodded his head, took a sip, and setting the saucer on the table, he ar-

ticulated, with the most good-natured of smiles, and as though involuntarily keeping time to the blows: "Tchiúki-tchiúki-tchiúk! tchiúki-tchiúk! tchiúki-tchiúk!"

"What 's that?"—I asked in amazement.

"Why, by my orders, that mischievous monkey is being whipped yonder.—Do you know Vásya the butler?"

"What Vásya?"

"Why, the one who waited on us at dinner a little while ago. The one who wears such huge side-whiskers."

The fiercest wrath could not have withstood the clear and gentle gaze of Mardáry Apollónitch.

"What do you mean, young man, what do you mean?"—he said, shaking his head. "Am I a malefactor, I 'd like to know, that you stare at me like that? Whom he loveth, he chasteneth: you know that yourself."

A quarter of an hour later I bade Mardáry Apollónitch farewell. As I drove through the village, I caught sight of Vásya the butler. He was walking along the street, nibbling nuts. I ordered my coachman to stop the horses, and called him to me.

"Well, brother, so they have been flogging thee to-day?"—I asked him.

"And how do you know?"—answered Vásya.

"Thy master told me."

"The master himself?"

"What did he order thee to be whipped for?"

"I deserved it, dear little father, I deserved it. We are not whipped for trifles; that's not the custom with us—naw, naw. Our master is not that sort of a man; our master—why, you could n't find such another master in the whole government."

"Drive on!"—I said to my coachman. "Here 's ancient Russia for you!"—I said to myself, on my homeward journey.

MEMOIRS OF A SPORTSMAN

(1852)

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MEMOIRS OF A SPORTSMAN

I

LEBEDYÁN [1]

ONE of the chief advantages of hunting, my dear readers, consists in this—that it forces you to go about constantly from place to place, which is extremely agreeable for an unoccupied man. In sooth, it is not always a very cheerful matter, especially in rainy weather, to roam about on the country roads, to go "cross-country," to stop any peasant you may meet with the question: "Hey there, my good fellow! how can we get to Mordóvka?" and in Mordóvka inquire of a dull-witted peasant wife (for the labourers are all in the fields) whether it is far to the posting-stations on the highway, and how one is to reach them,—and, after having traversed ten versts, instead of a posting-house, to find one's self in the extremely dilapidated little manorial hamlet of Khudobúbnovo, to the intense surprise of a whole herd of swine, buried to their ears in the dark-

[1] Lebedyán is the capital of the Government of Tambóff, and is celebrated for its horse-fair, to which cavalry remount-officers resort to purchase horses.—TRANSLATOR.

brown mud in the very middle of the street, and not at all expecting to be disturbed. Neither is it exhilarating to cross quaking little bridges, descend into ravines, and ford swampy brooks; it is not exhilarating to drive—for whole days to drive along the greenish sea of the highways, or, which God forbid, to get bemired for several hours in front of a striped mile-post with the figures " 22 " on one side and " 23 " on the other; it is not exhilarating to subsist for weeks on eggs, milk, and the vaunted sour rye bread. . . . But all these discomforts and misadventures are redeemed by another sort of benefits and pleasures. However, let us begin the story.

After all that has been said above, there is no necessity for my explaining to the reader, how I happened to come upon Lebedyán, five years ago, at the very height of the annual fair.[1] We sportsmen may drive forth, some fine morning, from our more or less hereditary estates, with the intention of returning by the evening of the following day, and, little by little, without ceasing to shoot woodcock, finally arrive on the blessed shores of the Petchóra River. Moreover, every one who is fond of dog and gun is a passionate respecter of the most noble animal in the world —the horse. Thus, I arrived at Lebedyán, put up at the inn, changed my clothes, and set out

[1] There are innumerable annual fairs in Russia, in the governments and districts.—TRANSLATOR.

for the fair. (The waiter, a long and gaunt young fellow, of twenty years, with a sweet, nasal tenor voice, had already contrived to impart to me, that Their [1] Illustrious Highness, Prince N., remount-officer of the * * * regiment, was stopping at our inn; that many other gentlemen had arrived; that the gipsies sang in the evenings, and that "Pan Tvardovsky" [2] was being played in the theatre; that horses, 't was said, were selling for high prices,—and good horses had been brought to the fair.)

On the fair-ground, in interminable rows, stretched peasant carts, and behind the carts were horses of all possible sorts: trotters, stud-farm horses, *bitiúki* [3] draught-horses, posting-horses, and plain peasant-horses. Some, well-fed and smooth, assorted according to colour, covered with horse-cloths of varied hues, hitched short to a high rack, were apprehensively rolling their eyes backward at the too familiar whips of their owners, the horse-dealers; the horses of landed proprietors, sent by noblemen of the steppes one or two hundred versts away, under the supervision of some decrepit coachman and two or three hard-headed grooms, were flourishing their long necks, stamping their hoofs, and gnawing the posts out of boredom; roan Vyátka

[1] The respectful form for *His*.—Translator.

[2] The dramatisation of a novel of that title, published (1859) by Jospeh Ignatius Krasçewsky (1812–1887).—Translator.

[3] See note on p. 101, Vol. I.

horses pressed close to one another; in majestic immobility, like lions, stood the broad-haunched trotters with waving tails and shaggy pasterns, dapple-grey, black, and brown. Experts paused respectfully in front of them. In the streets formed by the carts, people of all sorts of classes, stature, and aspect thronged: the horse-dealers, in blue kaftans and tall caps, craftily watched and waited for purchasers; goggle-eyed, curly-haired gipsies darted to and fro like madmen, inspected the horses' teeth, lifted their feet and tails, shouted, wrangled, served as go-betweens, cast lots, or fawned upon some remount-officer in military cap and cloak with beaver collar. A stalwart kazák towered up astride of a lank gelding with a deer-neck and sold it, "in one lot," that is to say, with saddle and bridle. Peasants, in sheepskin coats tattered under the armpits, descended by tens on a cart, drawn by a horse which must be "tried," or, somewhere apart, with the aid of a cunning gipsy, they bargained until they were worn out, struck hands on the deal a hundred times in succession, each insisting on his own price, while the object of their dispute, a wretched little nag covered with a shrunken rug, merely blinked its eyes, as though the matter did not concern it. . . . And, in fact, was it not all the same to it who would beat it! Broad-browed landed proprietors with dyed moustaches, and an expression of dignity

on their faces, in braided jackets and camelot peasant-coats, worn with an arm in one sleeve, condescendingly conversed with pot-bellied merchants in beaver hats and green gloves. Officers of various regiments were discussing matters there also; a remarkably tall cuirassier, of German extraction, was coolly asking a horse-dealer how much he expected to get for that sorrel horse. A fair-haired young hussar, nineteen years of age, was picking out a trace horse to go with an emaciated pacer; a postilion, in a low-crowned hat, surrounded with peacock feathers, in a brown long-coat, and with leather mittens thrust into his narrow, greenish belt, was looking for a shaft-horse for a tróïka. The coachmen plaited their horses' tails, dampened their manes, and gave deferential advice to their masters. On concluding the trade, they hastened to the eating-tavern or the dram-shop, according to their means. . . . And all this uproar, shouting, bustle, wrangling, reconciliations, cursing, and laughter was going on in mud knee-deep. I wanted to buy a tróïka of fairly good horses, for my britchka: mine were beginning to shirk their work. I found two, but could not manage to match them with a third. After dinner, which I will not undertake to describe (even Æneas knew how unpleasant it is to recall bygone woe), I set out for the so-called coffee-house, where every evening the remount-officers, stud-farm

men, and other visitors were wont to assemble. In the billiard-room, drowned in floods of leaden-hued tobacco-smoke, were about a score of men. There were free-and-easy young landed proprietors in braided hussar-jackets and grey trousers, with long mutton-chop whiskers and pomaded moustaches, gazing loftily and boldly about; other nobles in kazák coats, with remarkably short necks and little eyes swimming in fat, were painfully snoring away there also; the merchants sat apart, " pricking up their ears," as the saying is; the officers chatted freely among themselves. Prince N., a young man of five and twenty, with a merry and somewhat scornful face, clad in a coat thrown open on the breast, a red silk shirt, and full velvet trousers, was playing billiards; he was playing with Viktór Khlopakóff, a retired lieutenant.

Ex-Lieutenant Viktór Khlopakóff, a thin and swarthy little man of thirty years, with thin, black hair, brown eyes, and a short, tip-tilted snub-nose, is a diligent attendant upon elections and fairs. He skips as he walks, sets his arms akimbo swaggeringly, wears his cap on one ear, and turns up the sleeves of his military coat, lined with bluish calico. Mr. Khlopakóff understands how to curry favour with the wealthy Petersburg rakes, smokes, drinks, and plays cards with them, and addresses them as " thou." Why they favour him is a good deal of a puzzle.

He is not clever, he is not even amusing; neither is he useful as a buffoon. To tell the truth, they treat him in an amicably-careless way, like a good-natured but empty-pated fellow; they haunt his society for the space of two or three weeks, and then suddenly cease even to bow to him, and he, also, no longer bows to them. A peculiarity of Lieutenant Khlopakóff consists in this: that he uses one and the same expression constantly for the period of a year, sometimes two years, appropriately and inappropriately, an expression not in the least amusing, but which, God knows why, sets every one to laughing. Eight years ago, he used to say, at every step, "My respects to you, I thank you most humbly," and his patrons of that epoch fairly expired with laughter every time and made him repeat, "My respects"; then he began to use a rather complicated expression, "No, now you know, keskese—that proves proved," and with the same dazzling success; two years later, he invented a new quaint saying, "*Ne vous goryatchez*[1] *pas,* you man of God, sewn up in a sheepskin," and so forth. And lo! as you see, his far from ingenious little remarks supply him with food, drink, and apparel. (He has long ago squandered his property, and lives exclusively at the expense of his friends.) Observe, that he possesses positively no other amiable

[1] *Goryatchítsya,* to get heated, angry.—Translator.

characteristics: 't is true, that he will smoke a hundred pipes of Zhúkoff [1] tobacco a day, and, when playing billiards, he raises his right foot higher than his head, and as he takes aim, wriggles his cue violently in his hand;—well, but not every one is an admirer of such merits. He is a good drinker, also . . . . but it is difficult to distinguish one's self in Russia by that means. . . . In a word, his success is a complete mystery to me. . . . There may be one reason for it, perhaps: he is cautious, never tells tales out of school, never utters a bad word about anybody.

" Come,"—I thought, at sight of Khlopakóff: —" what 's his catchword at present? "

The Prince pocketed the white.

" Thirty and nothing," roared the consumptive marker.

The Prince drove the yellow ball into the furthest pocket with a crash.

" Ekh! " approvingly grunted, with his whole body, a fat merchant, who sat in one corner at a tottering little table on a single leg,—grunted and quailed. But, luckily, no one noticed him. He sighed and stroked his beard.

" Thirty-six and very little! " [2] shouted the marker through his nose.

[1] Equivalent to " navy-plug "—the coarsest sort of tobacco.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The game alluded to is a game with five balls. It is a fashionable fad for the marker to say, instead of " thirty and nothing," " thirty and very little," even substituting " nobody " for " nothing."—TRANSLATOR.

"Well, what do you think of that, brother?" the Prince asked Khlopakóff.

"Why, of course, rrrrakaliooon, a regular rrrrakaliooon!" [1]

The Prince burst out laughing.

"What, what 's that? say it again!"

"Rrrrakalioon!" repeated the ex-lieutenant, conceitedly.

"That 's the word!" I thought.

The Prince pocketed the red.

"Ekh! that 's wrong, Prince, that 's wrong," —suddenly stammered the fair-haired young officer with the reddened eyes, the tiny nose, and the childishly sleepy face. . . . "You don't play right . . . . you ought to have . . . . that 's wrong!"

"How so?" asked the Prince over his shoulder.

"You ought to have . . . . you know . . . . with a triplet. . . ."

"Really?" muttered the Prince through his teeth.

"Well, Prince, shall we go to the gipsies to-day?" put in the embarrassed young man. "Styóshka is going to sing. . . . Iliúshka . . . ."

The Prince did not answer him.

"Rrrrakaliooon, my good fellow," said Khlopakóff, cunningly screwing up his left eye.

[1] *Rakaliya* means a scamp or good-for-nothing. But it has no apparent connection with this nonsense.—Translator.

And the Prince burst into a roar of laughter.

"Thirty-nine and nothing," proclaimed the marker.

"All . . . . just look now, what I 'm going to do with that yellow . . . ." Khlopakóff wriggled the cue in his hand, took aim, and missed.

"Eh, rrakalioon," he shouted wrathfully.

Again the Prince laughed.

"What, what, what?"

But Khlopakóff did not wish to repeat his word: one must coquet a bit.

"You have made a miscue,"—remarked the scorer.—"Please to chalk . . . . Forty and very little!"

"Yes, gentlemen," said the Prince, turning to the whole assembly, but not looking at any one in particular:—"you know, we must call out Verzhembítzkaya."

"Of course, of course, without fail," several visitors vied with each other in exclaiming, being wonderfully flattered by the possibility of replying to the remark of a Prince:—"Verzhembítzkaya. . . ."

"Verzhembítzkaya is a capital actress,—far better than Sopnyakóva," squeaked a rascally-looking man, with moustache and spectacles, from one corner. Unhappy man! in secret he was sighing violently for Mme. Sopnyakóff, but the Prince did not deign even to look at him.

"Wai-er, hey, a pipe," said a tall man in a stock, with a regular face, and the most noble of miens,—but yet by all the signs, a card-sharper.

The waiter ran for a pipe, and on his return announced to His Illustrious Highness: "Positilion Baklága is asking for you, sir."

"Ah! well, order him to wait, and give him some vódka."

"Very good, sir."

Baklága (The Flask), as I was afterward told, was the nickname of a young, handsome, and extremely petted postilion; the Prince was fond of him, gave him horses, drove races with him, spent whole nights with him. . . . You would not recognise that Prince—formerly a scapegrace and a spendthrift—now. . . . How puffed up, tight-laced, and perfumed he is! How engrossed in the service,—and, chief of all, how sober-minded!

But the tobacco-smoke began to irritate my eyes. After listening to Khlopakóff's exclamation and the Prince's shout of laughter, for the last time, I betook myself to my chamber, where, on a narrow divan, with broken springs, covered with horse-hair, and with a tall, curved back, my man had already made up my bed.

On the following day I inspected the horses in the yards, and began with the well-known horse-dealer Sítnikoff. Through a wicket I entered a courtyard sprinkled with sand. In front

of the wide-open door of the stable stood the proprietor himself, a man no longer young, tall and stout, in a short-coat of peasant shape, lined with hareskin, and with a standing collar turned down. On perceiving me, he slowly moved to meet me, held his cap above his head with both hands, and said, in a singsong tone:

"Ah, our respects to you. I suppose you want to look at horses?"

"Yes, I came to look at horses."

"And what sort, exactly, may I venture to inquire?"

"Show me what you have."

"With pleasure."

We entered the stable. Several white curs rose from the hay, and ran to us, wagging their tails; a long-bearded goat stalked off to one side, in displeasure; three grooms, in strong but dirty sheepskin coats, bowed to us in silence. On the right and the left, in cleverly raised stalls, stood about thirty horses, splendidly groomed and cleaned. Pigeons were hopping along the cross-beams and cooing.

"For what, that is to say, do you require the horse: for driving or the stud-farm?"—Sítnikoff asked me.

"Both for driving and for the stud."

"I understand, sir, I understand, sir, I under-

stand, sir," articulated the horse-dealer, pausing between his words.—" Pétya, show the gentleman Ermine."

We went out into the yard.

" Would n't you like to have a bench brought out from the house? . . . . You don't want it? . . . . As you please."

Hoofs thundered over planks, a whip cracked, and Pétya, a man of forty years, pockmarked and swarthy, sprang forth from the stable, in company with a grey and fairly well-made stallion, allowed him to rear up, ran with him a couple of times round the yard, and cleverly pulled him up at the show spot. Ermine stretched himself out, snorted with a whistling sound, flirted his tail, twitched his muzzle, and gazed askance at us.

" A well-trained bird! " thought I.

" Give him his head, give him his head," said Sítnikoff and fixed his eyes on me.

" What do you think of him, sir? "—he asked, at last.

" He is n't a bad horse—his fore legs are not sound."

" His legs are splendid! "—returned Sítnikoff, with conviction.—" And his loins . . . . be so good as to look . . . . a regular oven; you might even sleep your fill on them."

" His cannon-bones are long."

"What do you call long—good gracious! Run, Pétya, run, and at a trot, trot, trot . . . . don't let him gallop."

Again Pétya ran round the yard with Ermine. We all maintained silence.

"Well, put him back in his place," said Sítnikoff:—"and bring out Falcon."

Falcon, a stallion black as a beetle, of Dutch pedigree, with a sloping back, and lean, proved to be little better than Ermine. He belonged to the category of horses of which sportsmen say that "they hack and cut and take prisoner,"—that is to say, in action they turn out and fling out their fore legs to the right and left, but make little headway.[1] Middle-aged merchants admire that sort of horses: their gait is suggestive of the dashing pace of an alert waiter; they are good in single harness, for a drive after dinner; stepping out cock-a-hoop, curving their necks, they zealously drag the clumsy drozhky, laden with a coachman who has eaten himself into a state of numbness, and a squeezed merchant[2] suffering from heart-burn, and a lymphatic merchant's wife, in a sky-blue silk sleeved coat, and

[1] Dishing, in English.—Translator.

[2] The smaller the drozhky, the more popular and stylish it is. If the passengers bulge over, and the coachman, through his own admired fat and the tightness of the drozhky, has to straddle the dashboard with his knees, and keep his feet on iron supports outside, the height of fashion and happiness is assured. If not fat enough naturally, cushions are added to secure the "broad seat" which Russians consider stylish and safe.—Translator.

with a lilac kerchief on her head.[1] I declined Falcon. Sítnikoff showed me several other horses. . . . At last one, a dappled-grey stallion, of Voiéikoff breed, pleased me. I could not refrain from patting him on the forelock with pleasure. Sítnikoff immediately feigned indifference.

"Does he drive well?"—I inquired. (The word "go" is not used of trotters.)

"Yes,"—replied the horse-dealer, calmly.

"Cannot I see him?" . . . .

"Why not?—certainly, sir. Hey, there, Kúzya, put Overtaker in a drozhky."

Kúzya, the jockey, a master of his business, drove past us three times along the street. The horse went well, did not break, did not sway, his action was free, he held his tail up and stepped out firmly, with a long, regular stride.

"And what do you ask for him?"

Sítnikoff mentioned a preposterous price. We had begun to chaffer there, in the street, when, suddenly, from round the corner thundered swiftly a splendidly matched posting-tróïka, and drew up in dashing fashion in front of the gate to Sítnikoff's house. In the dandified sporting-cart sat Prince N.; beside him towered Khlopakóff. The Flask was driving,—

[1] Old-fashioned women of the merchant class, no matter how wealthy they may be, still wear no bonnets, but merely a silk kerchief on the head.—TRANSLATOR.

and how he drove! he could have got through an earring, the rascal! The brown side-horses, small, vivacious, black-eyed, black-legged, were fairly on fire, fairly gathered themselves together with nervous tension; if one had whistled, they would have vanished like a shot. The dark-bay shaft-horse stood firmly, with his neck curved like a swan's, his chest thrown forward, his legs like arrows; he shook his head and proudly screwed up his eyes.—Good! 'T was like some one taking a drive on the bright festival (Easter).

"Your Illustrious Highness! Deign to favour us!" cried Sítnikoff.

The Prince sprang from his cart. Khlopakóff slowly alighted on the other side.

"Good morning, brother. . . . Have you any horses?"

"Of course I have for Your Illustrious Highness. Be pleased to enter.—Pétya, bring out Peacock,—and let Meritorious be made ready. And you and I, dear little father,"—he continued, addressing me:—"will settle our business another time. . . . Fómka, a bench for His Illustrious Highness."

Peacock was led out from a special stable, which I had not noticed before. The powerful dark-brown horse fairly reared with all four feet in the air. Sítnikoff even turned his head away and narrowed his eyes.

"Ugh, rrakalion!"—proclaimed Khlopakóff. —"Zhemsà" (J'aime ça).

The Prince laughed.

Peacock was halted with difficulty: he fairly dragged the stablemen round the yard; at last they pressed him against the wall. He snorted, quivered, and gathered himself together, but Sítnikoff still teased him, flourishing a whip at him.

"Where art thou staring? I 'll give it to thee! ugh!" said the horse-dealer, with affectionate menace, himself involuntarily admiring his horse.

"How much?"—asked the Prince.

"For Your Illustrious Highness, five thousand."

"Three."

"Can't be done, Your Illustrious Highness, upon my word—"

"You 've been told three, rrakalion," put in Khlopakóff.

I did not wait to see the end of the bargain, and went away. At the extreme end of the street I noticed at the gate of a greyish little house a large sheet of paper pasted up. At the top was a pen-and-ink sketch of a horse, with a tail in the shape of a trumpet and an endless neck, and under the horse's hoofs stood the following words, written in old-fashioned script:

"For sale here, horses of various colours, brought to the Lebedyán fair from the well-known stud-farm on the steppe of Anastásey Iványitch Tchernobáy, landed pro-

prietor of Tambóff. These horses are of excellent form, perfectly trained, and of gentle disposition. Messrs. Buyers will be so good as to ask for Anastásey Iványitch himself: should Anastásey Iványitch be absent, then ask for his coachman, Nazár Kubýshkin. We beg the Messrs. Buyers to honour an old man."

I halted. "Come," I thought, "I 'll take a look at the horses of the well-known horse-breeder, Mr. Tchernobáy."

I tried to enter the wicket-gate, but, contrary to custom, I found it locked. I knocked.

"Who 's there? . . . . A buyer?"—piped a feminine voice.

"Yes."

"Directly, dear little father, directly."

The wicket opened. I beheld a peasant woman about fifty years of age, her hair uncovered, in boots and a sheepskin coat open on the breast.

"Please to enter, benefactor, and I 'll go at once and announce you to Anastásey Iványitch. . . . Nazár, hey, Nazár!"

"What 's wanted?" mumbled the voice of an old man of seventy from the stable.

"Get the horses ready; a buyer has come."

The old woman ran into the house.

"A buyer, a buyer," Nazár growled after her in reply.—"I have n't got all their tails washed yet."

"Oh, Arkadia!" I thought.

"Good morning, dear little father, I beg your favour,"—a succulent and agreeable voice resounded behind my back. I glanced round: in front of me, in a long-skirted, blue cloak, stood an old man of medium height, with white hair, an amiable smile, and very handsome blue eyes.

"Didst thou want a horse? Certainly, dear little father, certainly. . . . But wilt not thou first come in and drink a cup of tea with me?"

I declined, with thanks.

"Well, as thou wilt. Thou must excuse me, dear little father: I hold to the old-fashioned ways, seest thou?" (Mr. Tchernobáy spoke without haste, with a rotund pronunciation of the *o*.[1])—"Everything about me is very simple, thou knowest. . . . Nazár, hey, Nazár,"—he added in a drawl, and without raising his voice.

Nazár, a wrinkled little old man with a hawk-like nose and a wedge-shaped little beard, made his appearance on the threshold of the stable.

"What sort of horses dost thou require, dear little father?" went on Mr. Tchernobáy.

"Some that are not too dear, well broken to harness, for my kibítka."

"Very well—I have such . . . . certainly.

[1] Unless the accent—which is variable—happens to fall on the *o*, it is pronounced slightingly, somewhat like *a*. This is the new-fangled, fashionable method. The other form indicates either rusticity, clinging to old fashions, or that the speaker belongs to the ecclesiastical class, the *o* being very rotund in the Old Slavonic, which is always used in the services of the Church.—TRANSLATOR.

. . . Nazár, Nazár, show the gentleman the grey gelding, the one which stands at the end, thou knowest, and the bay with the star,—or no, not that one . . . . the other bay, the one of Beauty's get, knowest thou?"

Nazár went back into the stable.

"And do thou lead them out by their halters," shouted Mr. Tchernobáy after him.

"I don't do, dear little father," he went on, looking me frankly and gently in the face, "as horse-dealers do—confound them! they use ginger in various shapes, and salt and malt;[1] I wash my hands of them completely!—But I have everything aboveboard, without trickery, please to observe."

The horses were led out. I did not like them.

"Well, put them in their places, with God's blessing," said Anastásey Iványitch. "Show us some others."

They showed some others. At last I selected one as cheap as possible. We began to haggle. Mr. Tchernobáy did not get heated, he talked so sensibly, with so much pompousness, that I could not help "honouring the old man"; I made a deposit.

"Well, now," said Anastásey Iványitch:—"permit me, in accordance with ancient custom, to transfer the horse to thee from coat-skirt to

[1] Salt and malt fatten a horse very quickly.

coat-skirt. . . . . Thou wilt thank me for it . . . . 't is a fresh beast, sound as a nut . . . . without a flaw . . . . a gen-u-ine horse of the steppe! It will go in any harness."

He crossed himself, laid the skirt of his great cloak on his hand, took the halter and transferred the horse to me.

" Possess it, with God's blessing, now. . . . . And thou still dost not wish any tea? "

" No, I 'm greatly obliged to you: it is time I was going home."

" As thou wilt. . . . And shall my coachman lead the horse after thee now? "

" Yes, now, if you will permit."

" Certainly, my dear man, certainly. . . . Vasíly, hey, Vasíly, go with the gentleman; lead the horse, and receive the money. Well, good-bye, dear little father, God bless thee."

" Good-bye, Anastásey Iványitch."

My horse was led home. On the following day, it turned out to be foundered and lame. I undertook to harness it: my horse backed, and it was struck with the whip; it began to balk, kick, and lie down. I betook myself at once to Mr. Tchernobáy. I asked:

" Is he at home? "

" He is."

" What do you mean by it? " said I:—" you have sold me a foundered horse."

" Foundered?—God forbid! "

"And it 's lame to boot, and balks into the bargain."

"Lame? I know nothing about that; evidently thy coachman has ruined it somehow,—but, I, as in the sight of God—"

"By rights, Anastásey Iványitch, you ought to take it back."

"No, dear little father, don't be angry: once the horse has left the yard—there 's an end of it. Thou shouldst have looked at it before."

I understood how the land lay, submitted to my fate, laughed, and departed. Fortunately, I had not paid so very dear for my lesson.

Two days later I drove away, and after the lapse of a week I passed through Lebedyán on my way home. In the coffee-house I found nearly the same persons as before, and Prince N. at the billiard-table. But the customary change in Mr. Khlopakóff's fate had already had time to take place. The fair-haired young officer had replaced him in the Prince's favour. The poor ex-lieutenant made an effort to set off his little word once more in my presence,—perchance, thought he, it will please as heretofore,—but the Prince not only did not smile, he even frowned and shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Khlopakóff dropped his eyes, shrunk together, stole into a corner, and began softly to stuff his pipe full. . . . .

II

TATYÁNA BORÍSOVNA AND HER NEPHEW

Give me your hand, my amiable reader, and come with me. The weather is magnificent; the May sky is of a soft azure hue; the smooth, young leaves of the willows glisten as though they had been washed; the broad, level road is all covered with that fine, reddish-bladed grass which the sheep are so fond of nibbling; to right and left, on the long declivities of the sloping hills, the green rye is waving gently; the shadows of small cloudlets slip across it in thin splotches. In the distance forests darkle, ponds glimmer, villages gleam yellow; larks soar upward by hundreds, warble, fall headlong downward, and perch upon small clods with outstretched necks; daws halt on the highway, stare at you, and cower down to the ground; they allow you to pass, and, giving a couple of hops, fly off to one side; on the height, beyond the ravine, a peasant is ploughing; a piebald colt, with a stubby tail and dishevelled mane, is running on unsteady legs after its mother; its shrill neighing is audible. We drive into a birch coppice; the strong, fresh odour agreeably oppresses our breath. Here is

the boundary-fence; the coachman descends from his seat, the horses snort, the side-horses glance around, the shaft-horse flirts his tail, and leans his head against the arch[1] . . . . . the rude bars open with a squeak. The coachman resumes his seat. . . . Drive on! ahead of us is a village. After passing five homesteads, we turn to the right, descend into a hollow, and drive on the dam. Beyond the small pond, from behind the rounded heads of apple-trees and lilac-bushes, a board roof which has once been red, with two chimneys, is visible. The coachman directs his course along the fence to the left; accompanied by the hoarse and yelping barks of very aged curs, he drives through the wide-open gate, dashes adroitly round the spacious yard, past the stables and carriage-houses, bestows a swaggering bow upon the old housekeeper, who is stepping sideways over the lofty threshold into the open door of the storehouse, and draws up, at last, in front of the small porch of a tiny, dark house, with bright windows. . . . . We are at Tatyána Borísovna's. And yonder is she herself, opening the hinged pane, and nodding to us. . . . . Good morning, mátushka![2]

Tatyána Borísovna is a woman about fifty years of age, with large, grey, prominent eyes, a rather blunt nose, red cheeks, and a double chin.

[1] The arch connecting the shafts.—Translator.

[2] Literally, "Dear little mother"; an affectionately respectful mode of address for any woman, of any class.—Translator.

Her face breathes forth welcome and cordiality. She was married once, but soon was left a widow. Tatyána Borísovna is an extremely remarkable woman. She resides on her tiny estate, never leaves it, has very little intercourse with her neighbours, and receives and likes only young people. She was the daughter of very poor gentry, and received no education whatever,—that is to say, she does not speak French; she has never even been in Moscow,—and, despite all these defects, she bears herself so simply and finely, she feels and thinks so freely, she is so little infected with the ordinary infirmities of the petty landed proprietress, that, in truth, it is impossible not to feel amazed. . . . And, in fact, think of a woman who lives the year round in the country, in the wilds—and does not gossip, does not squeal, does not courtesy, does not get excited, does not choke, does not quiver with curiosity. . . . . She's a marvel! She generally wears a grey taffeta gown and a white cap with pendent lilac ribbons; she is fond of good eating, but not to excess; she leaves the preparation of preserves and dried and salted provisions to the housekeeper. "What does she do all day long?" you ask. . . . . "Does she read?"—No, she does not read; and, to tell the truth, books are not printed for her benefit. . . . If she has no visitors, my Tatyána Borísovna sits at the window and knits stockings in winter; in summer

she strolls in the garden, plants and waters her flowers, plays with the kittens for hours together, feeds the pigeons. . . . . She occupies herself very little with the housekeeping. But if a guest comes, some young neighbour whom she likes, then Tatyána Borísovna brightens up all over; she gives him a seat, treats him to tea, listens to his stories, laughs, pats him on the cheek from time to time, but she herself says little: in calamity, in grief, she will comfort, will give good advice. How many people have confided to her their domestic, their intimate secrets, and have wept in her arms! She will seat herself opposite a guest, lean softly on her elbows, and gaze into his eyes with so much sympathy, will smile in so friendly a manner, that the thought will, inevitably, occur to the visitor: "What a splendid woman thou art, Tatyána Borísovna! Come now, I 'll tell thee what I have on my heart." A man feels at ease and warm in her small, cosy rooms; the weather is always fine in her house, if one may so express one's self. A wonderful woman is Tatyána Borísovna, but no one is surprised at her: her sound sense, firmness, and freedom, her ardent sympathy with the woes and joys of other people, in a word, all her fine qualities seem to have been born with her, to have cost her no labour or anxiety. . . . It is impossible to imagine her otherwise; consequently, there is nothing to thank her for. She is particu-

larly fond of watching the games and pranks of young people; she will fold her hands on her lap, lay her head on one side, screw up her eyes, and sit smiling; then, all of a sudden, she will sigh and say: " Akh, you, my children, children! " . . . . . So that you feel like going to her, and taking her hand, and saying to her: " Listen, Tatyána Borísovna, you don't know your own value, for, with all your simplicity and lack of education, you are a remarkable being! " Her very name has a sort of familiar, cordial ring, one utters it with pleasure, it evokes a friendly smile. How many times has it happened to me, for instance, to ask a peasant whom I chanced to meet: " How am I to get to Gratchyóvko," let us say, " brother? "—"Well, dear little father, do you go first to Vyazovóe, and thence to Tatyána Borísovna's, and from Tatyána Borísovna's any one will point out the way to you." And at the name of Tatyána Borísovna the peasant will shake his head in quite a peculiar manner. She keeps only a small staff of servants, in consonance with her means. In the house, the laundry, storeroom, and kitchen are under the charge of the housekeeper, Agáfya, formerly her nurse, an extremely good-hearted, tearful, and toothless creature; two buxom maids, with strong, purplish-red cheeks, after the pattern of Antónoff (winter) apples, are under her orders. The duties of valet, butler, and pantry-man are discharged by Polikárp, a

servant of seventy years, a remarkably eccentric person, a well-read man, a former violinist and worshipper of Viotti, a personal foe of Napoleon, or, as he says, of "Bonapartíshka,"[1] and a passionate adorer of nightingales. He always keeps five or six of them in his room; early in the spring, he sits beside their cages for whole days at a time, awaiting their first "warble"; and when it comes he covers his face with his hands and moans: "Okh, 't is pitiful, pitiful!"—and begins to weep as though his heart would break. Polikárp's grandson, Vásya, a lad of twelve years, curly-haired and keen-eyed, is appointed to assist him; Polikárp loves him unboundedly, and grumbles at him from morning until night. But he busies himself with his education.—"Vásya,"—he says, "tell me: is Bonapartíshka a brigand?"—"What wilt thou give, daddy?"—"What will I give? . . . I won't give thee anything. . . Who art thou, I 'd like to know? Art thou a Russian?"—"I 'm an Amtchanín, daddy; I was born in Amtchénsk."[2] "Oh, stupid head! and where 's Amtchénsk?"—"How should I know!"—"Is Amtchénsk in Russia, stupid?"—"Well, and if it is in Russia, what then?"—"What dost thou mean by 'what

[1] The diminutive of scorn and utter worthlessness ends thus in *ishka*.—Translator.

[2] In popular speech, the town of Mtzensk is called Amtchénsk, and its citizens Amtcháni. The Amtcháni men are daring; not without reason is an enemy with us promised "an amtchanín."

then'? His Illustrious Highness the late Prince Mikhaílo Ilariónovitch Goleníshshtcheff-Kutúzoff-Smolénsky, with the help of God, was pleased to expel Bonapartíshka from the confines of Russia. On that occasion, also, the ballad was composed: 'Bonaparte does n't feel like dancing, he has lost his garters.' . . . . . Dost understand? He freed thy fatherland."—"And what care I for that?"—"Akh, thou stupid boy, thou stupid! Why, if the most illustrious Prince Mikhaílo Ilariónovitch had not chased out Bonapartíshka, some 'mossoo' or other would be whacking thee over the head with a stick, seest thou? He would come up to thee and say: 'Coman vu porte vu?'—and whack, whack!"—"Then I 'd hit him in the belly with my fist."—"And he 'd say to thee: 'Bonzhur, vene isi,'—and he 'd grab thee by the hair, by the hair!"—"And I 'd stamp on his feet, his feet, his knobby feet."—"That 's so, they do have knobby feet. . . . . Well, and when he began to bind thy arms, what wouldst thou do then?"—"I would n't let him: I 'd call Mikhéi the coachman to my assistance."—"And dost thou think, Vásya, that the Frenchman could not overpower Mikhéi?"—"Overpower him, indeed! just see how robust Mikhéi is!"—"Well, and what would you two do to him?"—"We 'd beat him on his back,—yes, on his back."—"And he 'd begin to shriek: 'Pardon! pardon, pardon, sivuplay!'"—"And

we 'd say to him: 'No sivuplay for thee, thou damned Frenchman! . . .'" "Brave lad, Vásya! . . . Come, now, shout: 'Bonapartíshka is a brigand!'"—"Then do thou give me some sugar!"—"What a boy!" . . . .

Tatyána Borísovna consorts very little with the landed proprietors: they go to her reluctantly, and she does not know how to entertain them; she falls into a doze at the noise of their remarks, gives a start, makes an effort to open her eyes, and again relapses into slumber. In general, Tatyána Borísovna is not fond of women. One of her friends, a fine, peaceable young man, had a sister, an old maid of eight and thirty years and a half, the kindest of beings, but unnatural, affected, and given to enthusiasms. Her brother frequently narrated to her anecdotes of their neighbour. One fine morning, my old maid, without saying a word to any one, ordered her horse to be saddled, and set out to see Tatyána Borísovna. In her long habit, with her hat on her head and a green veil and curls floating, she entered the anteroom, and dodging the panic-stricken Vásya, who took her for a water-nymph, she ran into the drawing-room. Tatyána Borísovna was frightened, and tried to rise, but her limbs gave way beneath her.—"Tatyána Borísovna,"—began the visitor, in a tone of entreaty, "excuse my boldness; I am the sister of your friend, Alexyéi Nikoláevitch K * * *, and I

have heard so much about you from him, that I made up my mind to become acquainted with you."—" I feel greatly honoured," murmured the astounded hostess. The visitor threw off her hat, shook back her curls, seated herself beside Tatyána Borísovna, and took her hand. . . . " So, this is she,"—she began in a pensive, touched voice:—" this is that good, serene, noble, holy being! This is she! this simple and, at the same time, profound woman! How glad I am, how glad I am! How we shall love each other! I shall rest, at last. . . . She is exactly as I have pictured her to myself,"—she added, in a whisper, boring her eyes into the eyes of Tatyána Borísovna. " You will not be angry with me, will you, my kind, my good one! "—" Really, I am very glad. . . . . Would not you like some tea? "—The visitor smiled condescendingly.

" Wie wahr, wie unreflechirt,"—she whispered, as though to herself. " Permit me to embrace you, my dear."

The old maid sat for three hours with Tatyána Borísovna, and never held her peace for a moment. She tried to expound to her new acquaintance her own significance. . . . Immediately after the departure of the unexpected visitor, the poor gentlewoman betook herself to the bath, drank a dose of linden-flower tea, and went to bed. But on the following day, the old maid returned, sat four hours, and withdrew promising to visit

Tatyána Borísovna every day. You will please to observe, that she had taken it into her head to develop, to put the finishing touches to the education of such a rich nature, as she expressed herself; and, probably, she would have completely exhausted it in the end, had it not been for the fact that, in the first place, she got "utterly" disenchanted as to her brother's friend in the course of a fortnight; and, in the second place, if she had not fallen in love with a passing student, with whom she instantly entered into an active and ardent correspondence; in her epistles, as was fitting, she blessed him for a holy and most beautiful life, offered "the whole of herself" as a sacrifice, demanded only the name of sister, plunged into descriptions of nature, alluded to Goethe, Schiller, Bettina, and German philosophy,—and, at last, drove the poor young man to grim despair. But youth asserted its rights: one fine morning, he awoke with such exasperated hatred for his "sister and best friend," that he came near knocking his valet down, in the heat of passion, and, for a long time, all but bit at the slightest hint about exalted and disinterested love. . . . But, from that time forth Tatyána Borísovna began more than ever to avoid intimacy with her neighbours.

Alas! nothing is stable upon earth. Everything which I have related concerning my kind gentlewoman's mode of life is a thing of the

past; the tranquillity which reigned in her house has been destroyed forever. For more than a year now, her nephew, an artist from Petersburg, has been living with her. This is the way it came about.

Eight years ago, there lived with Tatyána Borísovna a boy of twelve, orphaned of father and mother, Andriúsha, the son of her deceased brother. Andriúsha had large, bright, humid eyes, a tiny mouth, a regular nose, and a very handsome, lofty brow. He spoke in a soft, sweet voice, kept himself tidy and decorous, was cordial and attentive to visitors, and kissed his aunt's hand with an orphan's sensibility. No sooner would you make your appearance than, lo and behold, he was already bringing you an armchair. He never played any pranks at all; he never made any noise; he would sit by himself in a corner, over his book, so modestly and submissively, and not even lean against the back of the chair. A visitor would enter,—my Andriúsha would rise, smile courteously, and flush; the visitor would leave the room;—he would seat himself again, pull a little brush and mirror from his pocket, and arrange his hair. He had felt an inclination for drawing from his earliest years. If a scrap of paper fell into his hands, he would immediately ask Agáfya the housekeeper for her scissors, carefully cut from the paper a regular square, draw a narrow frame around it, and set

to work; he would draw an eye with a huge pupil, or a Grecian nose, or a house with a chimney and smoke in the form of a screw, a dog "en face," resembling a bench, a tree with two doves, and sign it: "Drawn by Andréi Byelovzóroff, on such a date, of such a year, village of Máliya Brýki." He toiled with particular zeal, for a couple of weeks before Tatyána Borísovna's name-day,[1] was the first to present himself to congratulate her, and offered a roll tied up with a pink ribbon. . Tatyána Borísovna kissed her nephew on the brow, and untied the knot; the roll spread out, and disclosed to the curious view of the spectator a round temple with an altar in the middle, boldly washed in in India ink; on the altar lay a flaming heart and a wreath, and above, on an undulating scroll, in plain letters, stood written: "To my aunt and benefactress Tatyána Borísovna Bogdánoff, from her respectful and loving nephew, in token of the most profound devotion." Tatyána Borísovna kissed him again and gave him a ruble. But she felt no great affection for him: Andriúsha's obsequiousness did not altogether please her. In the meantime, Andriúsha was growing up; Tatyána Borísovna was beginning to grow anxious as to his future. An unexpected event rescued her from her dilemma. . . .

[1] The name-day—the day of the Saint after whom a person is named—is celebrated instead of the birthday.—TRANSLATOR.

To wit: one day, eight years ago, a certain Mr. Benevolénsky, a collegiate assessor [1] and cavalier of an order, dropped in to call. Mr. Benevolénsky had formerly been in the service in the neighbouring county town, and had been an assiduous visitor at Tatyána Borísovna's; he had removed to Petersburg, had entered a ministry, had attained to a fairly important post, and during one of his frequent trips on government business he had recalled his old friend, and dropped in to see her, with the intention of resting for a couple of days from the cares of the service, "in the lap of rustic tranquillity." Tatyána Borísovna received him with her habitual cordiality, and Mr. Benevolénsky . . . . But before we go on with our story, permit us, dear reader, to make you acquainted with this new person.

Mr. Benevolénsky was a rather fat man, of medium height, soft in aspect, with small, short feet, and plump little hands; he wore a capacious and extremely neat swallow-tailed coat, a tall and broad neckerchief, snow-white linen, a gold chain on his silk waistcoat, a ring with a stone on his forefinger, and a blond wig; he talked persuasively and gently, walked noiselessly, smiled pleasantly, rolled his eyes about pleas-

[1] Grade No. 8, corresponding to the (former) title of Major, in Peter the Great's famous Table of Ranks. There are fourteen grades in all.—TRANSLATOR.

antly, plunged his chin into his neckerchief pleasantly: altogether, he was a pleasant man. The Lord had also endowed him with the kindest of hearts: he wept and went into raptures easily; above all, he burned with disinterested ardour for art, and this ardour was genuinely disinterested, for, if the truth must be told, it was precisely in the matter of art that Mr. Benevolénsky had positively no understanding whatsoever. One even marvelled whence, by virtue of what mysterious and incomprehensible laws, he had become infected with that passion. Apparently, he was a sedate, even a commonplace man . . . . . however, there are quite a good many such people among us in Russia.

Love for art and artists imparts to these people an inexplicable mawkishness; it is torture to know them, to converse with them: they are regular blockheads smeared with honey. For example, they never call Raphael Raphael, or Correggio Correggio: they say, " the divine Sanzio, the incomparable de Allegris," and invariably they pronounce their *o's* broadly. They laud every homespun, conceited, over-elaborated and mediocre talent as a genius, or, to be more accurate, " janius "; the blue sky of Italy, the southern lemon, the perfumed gales of the shores of the Brenta, are eternally on their lips. " Ekh, Ványa, Ványa," or " Ekh, Sásha, Sásha," they say to each other with ecstasy, " we ought to go

to the south, to the southland . . . for you and I are Greeks in spirit, ancient Greeks!" They may be observed at exhibitions, in front of the productions of certain Russian painters. (We must remark, that the majority of these gentlemen are frightfully patriotic.) First they retreat a pace, and loll their heads on one side, then they approach the picture again; their little eyes become suffused with an oily moisture. . "Phew, O my God,"—they say, at last, in a voice broken with emotion,—"what soul, what soul! What heart, what heart! how much soul he has put into it! a vast amount of soul! . . . . And how it is conceived! conceived in a masterly manner!"—And what pictures they have in their own drawing-rooms! What artists frequent them of an evening, drink their tea, listen to their conversation! What perspective views of their own rooms they offer them, with a brush in the right foreground, a pile of dirt on the polished floor, a yellow samovár on a table by the window, and the master of the house himself, in dressing-gown and skull-cap, with a brilliant spot of light on his cheek! What long-haired nurslings of the Muses, with feverishly-scornful smile, visit them! What pale-green young ladies squeal at their pianos! For that is the established order of things with us in Russia: a man cannot devote himself to one art alone—give him all! Hence, it is not in the least surprising, that these gentle-

men-amateurs also display great patronage to Russian literature, especially to dramatic literature. . . . The "Jacob Sanpasaros" are written for them; the conflict of unrecognised talent with people, with the whole world, which has been depicted a thousand times, shakes them to the very bottom of the soul. . . .

On the day following the arrival of Mr. Benevolénsky, Tatyána Borísovna, at tea, commanded her nephew to show the visitor his drawings. "And does your relative draw?" ejaculated Mr. Benevolénsky, not without surprise, and turned sympathetically to Andriúsha. "Certainly he does!"—said Tatyána Borísovna:—"he 's so fond of it! and he does it all alone, without any teacher, you know."—"Akh, show me, show me,"—interposed Mr. Benevolénsky. Andriúsha, blushing and smiling, brought his sketch-book to the visitor. Mr. Benevolénsky began, with the air of a connoisseur, to turn over the leaves. "Good, young man,"—he said at last:—"Good, very good." And he stroked Andriúsha's head. Andriúsha kissed his hand on the fly.—"Just see, what talent! . . . . . I congratulate you, Tatyána Borísovna, I congratulate you!"—"But what is to be done, Piótr Mikhaílitch? I cannot find any teacher for him here. It costs too much to have one come from town; there is an artist at my neighbours', the Artamónoffs, and a capital one he is, they say,

but the lady forbids him to give lessons to outsiders. She says he will spoil his taste."—"H'm,"—ejaculated Mr. Benevolénsky, as he fell to meditating, and cast sidelong glances at Andriúsha. "Well, we will talk the matter over,"—he suddenly added, rubbing his hands. That same day he requested permission of Tatyána Borísovna to have a private conversation with her. They locked themselves up. Half an hour later, they called Andriúsha. Andriúsha entered. Mr. Benevolénsky was standing at the window, with his face slightly flushed and his eyes beaming. Tatyána Borísovna was sitting in one corner, and wiping away her tears.—"Well, Andriúsha,"—she began at last:—"thank Piótr Mikhaílitch: he is going to take thee under his charge, and carry thee off to Petersburg." Andriúsha was fairly petrified where he stood.—"Tell me frankly,"—began Mr. Benevolénsky, in a voice permeated with dignity and condescension:—"Do you wish to become an artist, young man, do you feel a sacred vocation for art?"—"I do want to be an artist, Piótr Mikhaílitch,"—affirmed Andriúsha, tremulously.—"In that case, I am very glad. Of course,"—pursued Mr. Benevolénsky,—"you will find it hard to part from your respected aunt; you must feel the liveliest gratitude to her."—"I adore my aunty,"—Andriúsha interrupted him, blinking his eyes.—"Of course, of course, that is very natural and

does you much honour; but, on the other hand, just imagine, what joy, in course of time . . . . your successes. . ."—"Embrace me, Andriúsha,"—murmured the kind lady. Andriúsha flung himself on her neck.—"Well, and now thank thy benefactor. . . ." Andriúsha embraced Mr. Benevolénsky's paunch, raised himself on tiptoe, and so managed to grasp his hand, which the benefactor, truth to tell, accepted, yet made no great haste to accept. . . . The child must be soothed, satisfied,—well, and one may indulge one's self also. Two days later Mr. Benevolénsky departed, and carried with him his new protégé.

During the first three years of his absence, Andriúsha wrote with tolerable frequency, sometimes enclosing drawings in his letters. Mr. Benevolénsky occasionally added also a few words from himself, chiefly of approval; then the letters became more and more infrequent, and, at last, ceased altogether. Tatyána Borísovna's nephew maintained silence for a whole year: she had already begun to worry, when, suddenly, she received a note whose contents were as follows:

"Dear Aunty!

"Two days ago, Piótr Mikhaílovitch, my benefactor, died. A severe shock of paralysis has deprived me of my last support. Of course, I am already twenty years

of age; in the course of seven years I have made notable progress; I have strong hopes of my talent and can earn my living by means of it; I am not downcast, but, nevertheless, if you can, send me, for present expenses, two hundred and fifty rubles. I kiss your hands, and remain,"—and so forth.

Tatyána Borísovna sent her nephew the two hundred and fifty rubles. Two months later, he demanded some more; she gathered together her last resources, and sent again. Six weeks had not elapsed after the last despatch, when he asked for the third time, nominally for the purpose of purchasing paints for a portrait which a Princess Terteréshneff had ordered from him. Tatyána Borísovna refused. "In that case," he wrote to her, "I intend to come to you, in the country, to recuperate my health." And, in fact, in the month of May of that same year, Andriúsha returned to Máliya Brýki.

At first, Tatyána Borísovna did not recognise him. From his letters, she had expected a thin and sickly man, but she beheld a broad-shouldered, stout young fellow, with a broad, red face and curly, greasy hair. The pale, slender Andriúsha had been converted into sturdy Andréi Ivánoff Byelovzóroff. His external appearance was not the only thing in him which had undergone a change. The sensitive shyness, the caution and neatness of former years, had been replaced by a careless swagger, by intolerable

slovenliness; he swayed to right and left as he walked, flung himself into arm-chairs, sprawled over the table, lolled, yawned to the full extent of his jaws, and behaved impudently to his aunt and the servants,—as much as to say: "I 'm an artist, a free kazák! I 'll show you what stuff I 'm made of!" For whole days together, he would not take a brush in his hand; when the so-called inspiration came upon him, he would behave as wildly as though he were intoxicated, painfully, awkwardly, noisily; his cheeks would burn with a coarse flush, his eyes would grow inebriated; he would set to prating about his talent, his successes, of how he was developing and advancing. . . . But, as a matter of fact, it turned out that his gift barely sufficed for tolerably fair petty portraits. He was an utter ignoramus, he had read nothing; and why should an artist read? Nature, freedom, poetry,—those are his elements. So, shake thy curls, and chatter away volubly, and inhale Zhukóff [1] with frenzy! Russian swagger is a good thing, but it is not becoming to many; and talentless second-rate Polezháeffs are intolerable. Our Andréi Iványitch continued to live at his aunt's: evidently, gratuitous food was to his taste. He inspired visitors with deadly ennui. He would seat himself at the piano (Tatyána Borísovna had set up a piano also) and begin to pick out with one

[1] The coarsest sort of tobacco.—Translator.

finger "The dashing Tróïka"; he would strike chords, and thump the keys; for hours at a stretch he would howl Varlámoff's romances "The solitary Pine," or "No, Doctor, no, do not come," and the fat would close over his eyes, and his cheeks would shine like a drum. . . . . And then, suddenly, he would thunder: "Begone, ye tumults of passion!" . . . . And Tatyána Borísovna would fairly jump in dismay.

"'T is extraordinary,"—she remarked to me one day,—"what songs are composed nowadays, —they are all so despairing, somehow; in my day, they used to compose a different sort: there were sad ones then too, but it was always agreeable to listen to them. . . . . For example:

"Come, come to me in the meadow,
Where I wait for thee in vain;
Come, come to me in the meadow,
Where my tears flow hour after hour . . . .
Alas, thou wilt come to me in the meadow,
But then 't will be too late, dear friend!"

Tatyána Borísovna smiled guilefully.

"'I shall suf-fer, I shall suf-fer,'" howled her nephew in the adjoining room.

"Stop that, Andriúsha!"

"'My soul is lan-guishing in part-ing,'" continued the irrepressible singer.

Tatyána Borísovna shook her head.

"Okh, those artists!" . . . .

A year has passed since then. Byelovzóroff is still living with his aunt, and still preparing to go to Petersburg. He has become broader than he is long in the country. His aunt—who would have thought it?—is perfectly devoted to him, and the young girls of the neighbourhood fall in love with him. . . .

Many of Tatyána Borísovna's former acquaintances have ceased to visit her.

III

DEATH

I HAVE a neighbour, a young agriculturist and young sportsman. One fine morning I dropped in on him for a call, on horseback, with the suggestion that we should set out together in quest of woodcock. He consented. "Only," said he, "let us go through my tract of second growth of trees to the Zúsha; I 'll take a look at Tchaplýgino by the way. Do you know my oak forest? It is being felled."—"Come on."—He ordered his horse to be saddled, donned a green surtout with bronze buttons representing boars' heads, a game-bag embroidered in worsted, and a silver flask, threw over his shoulder a rather new French gun, turned himself about, not without pleasure, in front of the mirror, and called his dog Espérance, which had been presented him by his cousin, an old maid with an excellent heart, but without any hair. We set out. My neighbour took with him the village policeman Arkhíp, a fat and extremely short peasant with a square face and cheek-bones of antediluvian development, and a recently-engaged superintendent from the Baltic

provinces, a young fellow of nineteen years, thin, fair-haired, mole-eyed, with sloping shoulders, and a long neck, Mr. Gottlieb von der Koch. My neighbour himself had entered into possession of his estate not long before. It had come to him by inheritance from his aunt, the wife of Councillor of State [1] Kardón-Katáeff, a remarkably fat woman, who, even when she was lying in bed, groaned in a prolonged and plaintive manner. We rode into the tract of second growth trees. "Wait for me here, in the glade," said Ardalión Mikhaílitch (my neighbour), turning to his satellites. The German bowed, slipped off his horse, pulled a small book from his pocket, apparently a romance by Johann Schopenhauer, and sat down under a bush; Arkhíp remained in the sun, and never moved for the space of an hour. We made a circuit through the bushes, and found not a single covey. Ardalión Mikhaílitch announced that he intended to betake himself to the forest. For some reason or other, I myself had no faith in the success of our hunt on that day: I wended my way after him. The German noted his page, rose, put the book in his pocket, and mounted, not without difficulty, his bob-tailed, imperfect mare, which squealed and kicked out at the slightest touch; Arkhíp gave a start, jerked both reins simultaneously, flung his feet about, and, at last,

[1] The fifth grade from the top, in Peter the Great's Table of Ranks.—TRANSLATOR.

got his stupefied and spiritless little nag to move from the spot. We rode off.

Ardalión Mikhaílitch's forest had been familiar to me from my childhood. In company with my French tutor, M—r. Désire Fleury, the kindest of men (who, nevertheless, came near ruining my health for life, by making me drink De Roy's potion of an evening), I frequently walked to Tchaplýgino. The entire forest consisted of about two or three hundred enormous oak-trees and maples. Their stately, mighty boles darkled magnificently against the translucent golden-green of the hickories and mountain-ashes; they rose higher, outlined themselves gracefully against the clear azure, and there, at last, flung wide the canopy of their broad, gnarled boughs; hawks, honey-buzzards, kestrels soared whistling over the motionless crests, spotted woodpeckers tapped vigorously on the thick bark; the resonant song of the black thrush suddenly rang forth in the dense foliage, following the variable cry of the oriole; down below, in the bushes, hedge-sparrows, finches, and pewits twittered and warbled; chaffinches hopped briskly along the paths; a white hare stole along the edge of the woods, cautiously "limping"; a reddish-brown squirrel leaped in an offhand way from tree to tree, and suddenly sat down, with tail aloft, over our heads. In the grass, near the tall ant-hills, beneath the light shadow of the deeply

dented beautiful fronds of the ferns, violets and lilies of the valley bloomed, and mushrooms of various sorts, and crimson fly-agaric grew; in the little glades, amid the bushes, strawberries gleamed red. . . And what shade there was in the forest! In the very height of the heat, at noonday, it was perfect night: silence, perfume, coolness. . . . Cheerfully had I passed the time in Tchaplýgino, and therefore, I confess, it was not without a feeling of sadness that I now rode into the forest which was but too familiar to me. The pernicious, snowless winter of 1840 had not spared my old friends, the oaks and maples; withered, stripped bare, here and there covered with consumptive foliage, they drooped mournfully over the young coppice which had "taken their place but not replaced them."[1] Some, still clothed with leaves below, reared their lifeless, broken boughs aloft as though with reproach and despair; in the case of others, from the foliage, still tolerably dense, though not abundant, not copious as of yore, thick, dry, dead branches protruded; the bark of others had fallen at a dis-

[1] In the year 1840, although there was a most rigorous frost, no snow fell until the very end of December; all the crops were frozen, and many fine oak forests were ruined by that ruthless winter. It is difficult to replace them: the productive power of the soil is evidently lessening; on "forbidden" winter-killed lands (around which there had been a procession with holy pictures), in place of the former noble trees, birches and aspens are springing up of themselves; and with us no one knows how to propagate woods otherwise.

tance; others still had fallen altogether, and were rotting, like corpses, on the ground. Who could have foreseen it—that it would be impossible to find shade—shade in Tchaplýgino—anywhere! Well, I thought, as I gazed at the moribund trees: I think you must feel ashamed and bitter. . . . . Koltzóff's [1] verse recurred to my mind:

"What has become
Of the lofty speech,
The haughty power,
Th' imperial valour?
Where now is thy
Green might . . . ."

"Why is this, Ardalión Mikhaílitch,"—I began:—"Why did n't you fell these trees last year? You will not get a tenth part as much for them now, you see, as you would have got then."

He merely shrugged his shoulders.

"You 'd better have asked my aunt;—but the merchants came, brought their money, and importuned her."

"Mein Gott!"—von der Koch exclaimed at every step.—"Vat a prank! vat a prank!"

"What prank do you mean?"—remarked my neighbour, with a smile.

"Dat is, vat a peety, I meanttt to zay." (It is a well-known fact, that all Germans, when they

[1] Alexyéi Vasílievitch Koltzóff (1809–1842), a writer of extremely original national ballads.—Translator.

have at last mastered our letter *l*, with hard pronunciation, throw remarkable stress upon it.[1])

His regret was particularly aroused by the oaks which lay on the ground,—and, as a matter of fact, any miller would have paid a high price for them. On the other hand, Arkhíp, the village policeman, maintained imperturbable composure, and did not grieve in the least; on the contrary, he leaped over them not without satisfaction, and lashed them with his whip.

We were making our way to the spot where the felling was in progress, when suddenly, following the noise of a falling tree, a shout and talking rang out, and a few moments later a young peasant, pale and dishevelled, sprang out of the thicket toward us.

"What 's the matter?—Whither art thou running?"—Ardalión Mikhaílitch asked him.

He immediately came to a halt.

"Akh, dear little father, Ardalión Mikhaílitch, 't is a catastrophe!"

"What has happened?"

"Maxím, dear little father, has been hurt by a tree."

"How did that happen? . . . Maxím the contractor?"

"Yes, the contractor, dear little father. We

[1] The hard *l* is so difficult of pronunciation that some Russians renounce the attempt, and substitute *oo:* e. g., *ooáshad* (horse) for *lóshad*. The word here is *khotyélll*, and I have trebled the *t* to represent the author's trebled *l*.—Translator.

began to fell a maple, and he stood and watched. . . . He stood and stood, then went off to the well for water: he wanted a drink, you see; when, all at once, the maple began to crack and fell straight toward him. We shouted at him, 'Run, run, run!' . . . He ought to have leaped to one side, but he took and ran straight toward it . . . . he must have got frightened. And the maple covered him with its upper boughs. And why it fell so suddenly,—the Lord knows. . . . The heart must have been rotten."

"Well, and did it injure Maxím?"

"It did, dear little father."

"Mortally?"

"No, dear little father, he is still alive,—but what of that? it has broken his arms and legs. So I 'm running for Selivéstritch,—for the doctor."

Ardalión Mikhaílitch ordered the policeman to gallop to the village for Selivéstritch, and he himself rode forward at a swift trot to the clearing. . . . I followed him.

We found poor Maxím on the ground. Half a score of peasants were standing around him. We alighted. He was hardly groaning; from time to time he opened and dilated his eyes, gazed around him, as though in surprise, and bit his lips, which were turning blue. . . . His chin quivered, his hair adhered to his brow, his chest heaved unevenly: he was dying. The light shade of a young linden flitted across his face.

We bent over him. He recognised Ardalión Mikhaílitch.

"Dear little father,"—he began, in a barely audible tone:—"order . . . . the priest . . . . . to be sent for. . . . . The Lord . . . . has punished me . . . . my legs and arms are all smashed. . . . To-day . . . . is Sunday . . . . and I . . . . and I . . . . you see . . . did not let the lads go."

He ceased speaking. His breath failed him.

"And give . . . . . my money . . . . to my wife . . . . to my wife . . . . after deducting . . . . for my debts. . . Onísim here knows . . . . . to whom I . . . . . am in debt."

"We have sent for the doctor, Maxím,"—said my neighbour:—"perhaps thou wilt not die yet."

He tried to open his eyes, and raised his lids and his eyebrows with the effort.

"Yes, I shall die. Yonder . . . . yonder it is tapping, yonder it is, yonder . . . . . Forgive me, my lads, if in anything . . . . ."

"God pardons thee, Maxím Andréitch,"—said the peasants dully with one voice, and took off their caps:—"do thou forgive us."

He suddenly shook his head in a desperate way, painfully heaved his chest, and lowered it again.

"But he cannot be left to die here,"—exclaimed Ardalión Mikhaílitch:—"fetch hither a mat from the cart yonder, my lads,—let 's carry him to the hospital."

A couple of men rushed to the cart.

"I bought a horse . . . yesterday,"—stammered the dying man,—"from Efrím . . . . Sytchóvsky . . . . I gave him . . . . a deposit . . . . . so the horse is mine . . . . give it . . . . to my wife . . . . also . . . . ."

They began to lay him on the mat . . . . . he quivered all over like a bird which has been shot, and straightened himself. . . . .

"He is dead,"—muttered the peasants.

We mounted our horses in silence, and rode away.

The death of poor Maxím caused me to reflect. 'T is wonderful how the Russian man dies! It is impossible to call his condition before the end indifference or stupidity; he dies, as though he were performing a rite, coldly and simply.

Several years ago, in the village of another of my neighbours, a peasant was fatally burned in the grain-kiln. (He would have remained in the kiln, but a petty burgher who was passing by dragged him out,—he threw himself into a vat of water, and with the force of his flight he burst open the door beneath the flaming shed.) I went to see him in his cottage. It was dark, stifling, smoky in the cottage. I inquired where the sick man was.—"Why, yonder, dear little father, on the oven-bench,"—answered the grieving peasant-wife in a sing-song tone. I stepped up to him—the man was lying there, covered with his sheepskin coat, breathing heavily.—"Well, how dost thou feel?"—The sick man fidgeted about

on the oven, and tried to raise himself, but was covered with wounds and on the verge of death. "Lie still, lie still, lie still. . . . Well, how goes it? how art thou?"—"Bad, of course," said he.—"Art thou in pain?"—No answer.—"Dost thou want anything?"—No answer.—"Shall not I send thee some tea?"—"It is n't necessary."—I left him, and seated myself on the bench. I sat there for a quarter of an hour. I sat for half an hour,—the silence of the grave reigned in the cottage. In the corner, at the table beneath the holy pictures,[1] a little maiden of five years was hiding, and eating bread. The mother shook her finger at her now and then. People were walking about, pounding and chattering in the anteroom. The brother's wife was chopping up cabbage.—"Hey, Aksínya!"—said the sick man at last.—"What is it?"—"Give me some kvas."—Aksínya gave him the kvas. Again silence reigned. I asked in a whisper: "Has he received the communion?"—"Yes."—Well, then everything was in due order: he was waiting for death, that was all. I could not endure it, and left the house. . . .

I remember, too, that I once dropped in at the hospital in the village of Krasnogórye, to see my acquaintance, Peasant-Surgeon Kapitón, an ardent sportsman.[2]

[1] That is, in the right-hand corner, facing the door.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The German *feldsherr*, a doctor's assistant; or (in cases like the one here referred to) an independent doctor, for the peasants, with minor diploma.—TRANSLATOR.

This hospital consisted of a former wing of the seigniorial manor-house; the lady-owner of the estate herself had arranged it,—that is to say, she had given orders that over the door should be nailed up a blue board, with the inscription in white letters, "The Krasnogórye Hospital," and she had personally handed to Kapitón a handsome album wherein to jot down the names of the patients. On the first page of this album one of the philanthropic benefactress's dish-lickers and servile fawners had traced the following lines:

"Dans ces beaux lieux, où règne l'allégresse,
Ce temple fut ouvert par la Beauté;
De vos seigneurs admirez la tendresse,
Bons habitants de Krasnogorié!"

And another gentleman had added below:

"Et moi aussi j'aime la nature!
"Jean Kobyliátnikoff."

The doctor had purchased six beds with his own money, and had started out, invoking a blessing on himself with the sign of the cross, to heal God's people. There were, in addition to himself, two persons attached to the hospital: Pável the carver, who was subject to fits of insanity, and a peasant woman with a withered hand, Melikitrísa, who discharged the functions of cook. Both of them prepared the medicines, and dried and infused the herbs; they also restrained the fever

patients. The crazy carver was gloomy of aspect, and parsimonious as to words: at night he was wont to sing a song about "Venus most fair," and to appeal to every passer-by for permission to wed a certain maiden, Malánya by name, who had long been dead. The cripple-handed peasant-wife beat him, and forced him to tend her turkeys. Well, then, I was sitting one day with Doctor Kapitón. We had begun to chat about our last hunt, when, suddenly, there drove into the yard a peasant-cart drawn by a remarkably fat grey horse, such as millers use. In the cart sat a robust peasant, in a new long-coat, and with a streaky beard.—"Hey there, Vasíly Dmítritch,"—shouted Kapitón from the window:—"pray come in . . . . 'T is the miller from Lybóff"—he whispered to me. The peasant descended, grunting, from his cart, entered the doctor's room, sought the holy pictures with his eyes, and crossed himself.—"Well, what now, Vasíly Dmítritch, what 's the news . . . . But you must be ill: your face does n't look right."—"Yes, Kapitón Timoféeitch, something 's wrong."—"What 's the matter with you?"—"Why, this, Kapitón Timoféeitch. Not long ago, I bought a mill-stone in town: well, I brought it home, and when I began to unload it from the cart, I strained myself, probably, or something of the sort, and there was a ripping in my belly, as though something had broken . . . and ever

since then I have been ailing all the time. To-day I even feel very bad."—" H'm,"—said Kapitón, and took a pinch of snuff: " that means, you 've ruptured yourself. And did this happen to you long since? "—" Why, ten days ago."—"Ten days?" (The doctor inhaled the air through his teeth, and shook his head.) " Allow me to feel of you. . . . Well, Vasíly Dmítritch," he said at last: " I 'm sorry for thee, my dear fellow, but thou 'rt in a bad way, thou 'rt seriously ill; remain here with me; I will use every effort, but I will guarantee nothing."—" Is it as bad as that? "—muttered the astonished miller.—" Yes, Vasíly Dmítritch, it is very bad; you ought to have come to me a couple of days earlier, and it would n't have amounted to anything; I could have relieved you easily; but now there is inflammation, that 's what 's the matter: the first you know, gangrene will set in."—" But it cannot be, Kapitón Timoféeitch."—" But I tell you it is so."—" But why? "—(The doctor shrugged his shoulders.) —" And must I die from that trifle? "—" I don't say that . . . . but do stay here." The peasant meditated, meditated, stared at the floor, then at us, scratched his head, then caught up his cap. " Whither art thou going, Vasíly Dmítritch? "—" Whither? home, of course, if matters are as bad as that. I must make my arrangements, if that is so."—" But, good heavens! you will do yourself an injury, Vasíly Dmítritch; I 'm amazed that

you managed to get here, as it is. Do stay."—"No, brother, Kapitón Timoféeitch, if I must die, then I 'll die at home; for if I were to die here, the Lord only knows what would happen at my house."—"We don't know, as yet, Vasíly Dmítritch, how the affair will turn out. . . . . There is danger, of course, very great danger, there 's no disputing that . . . . . but that is precisely the reason why you ought to remain." (The peasant shook his head.)—"No, Kapitón Timoféeitch, I will not stay . . . . . but won't you prescribe some medicine?"—"Medicine alone will not help."—"I won't stay, I tell you."—"Well, do as you please . . . . only, look out, that you don't blame me afterward!"

The doctor tore a leaf out of the album, and, having written a prescription, he advised him what to do in addition. The peasant took the paper, gave Kapitón half a ruble, left the room, and climbed into his cart.—"Well, good-bye, Kapitón Timoféeitch; don't bear me ill-will, and don't forget my orphans, if anything . . . . ." "Hey, stay here, Vasíly!"—The peasant merely shook his head, slapped his horse with the reins, and drove out of the yard. I went out into the street and gazed after him. The road was muddy and full of holes; the miller drove cautiously, without haste, guiding the horse skilfully, and nodding to the persons whom he met. . . . . On the fourth day he died.

On the whole, it is wonderful how Russians die. Many dead now recur to my mind. I recall thee, my old friend, Avenír Sorokoúmoff, my fellow-student, who did not finish his course, a fine, noble man! Again I behold thy consumptive, greenish face, thy thin, reddish hair, thy gentle smile, thy ecstatic glance, thy long limbs; I hear thy weak, caressing voice. Thou livedst with the Great Russian landed proprietor, Gur Kupryánikoff; thou didst teach his children, Fófa and Zyózo, to read and write Russian, together with geography and history; thou didst patiently endure the heavy jokes of Gur himself, the coarse amiability of the butler, the stale pranks of the malicious little boys; not without a bitter smile, but also without complaint, didst thou comply with the capricious demands of the bored lady of the manor; on the other hand, when thou wert resting, how blissfully happy wert thou in the evening, after supper, when, having rid thyself, at last, of all obligations and occupations, thou wert wont to seat thyself at the window, and pensively smoke thy pipe, or eagerly turn over the leaves of a mutilated and soiled number of the thick journal brought from town by the surveyor, the same sort of homeless wight as thyself! How pleased wert thou then by all poems and novels, how easily did the tears well up to thine eyes, with what pleasure didst thou laugh, with what genuine love for mankind, with what noble

sympathy for everything that was good and beautiful was thy soul—pure as that of a child—permeated! I must say, to tell the truth, thou wert not distinguished for extraordinary wit; nature had not gifted thee with either memory or studiousness; in the university thou wert reckoned one of the worst students; at the lectures thou wert wont to sleep,—at the examinations, to maintain a solemn silence; but whose eyes beamed with joy, whose breath came short over the success, over the good fortune of a comrade? —Avenír's. . . . Who believed blindly in the lofty mission of his friends, who extolled them with pride, who defended them with obduracy? Who was it that knew neither envy nor self-love, who was it that disinterestedly sacrificed himself, who was it that willingly yielded submission to people who were not worth the soles of his shoes? . . . . . Always thou, always thou, our kind Avenír! I remember, that thou badest thy comrades farewell with broken heart, when thou wert setting off to become a tutor; evil premonitions tormented thee. . . . And, in fact, thou didst fare but ill in the country; in the country there was no one for thee to listen to adoringly, no one to admire, no one to love. . . . . And those steppe-dwellers and cultivated gentry treated thee like a teacher: some roughly, others carelessly. And moreover, thou didst not predispose in thy favour by thine appearance; thou wert shy, thou didst

blush, cast down thine eyes, stammer. . . . The country air did not even restore thy health: thou didst melt away like a candle, poor fellow! Truth to tell, thy chamber looked on the garden; bird-cherry trees, apple-trees, linden-trees shed their light blossoms on thy table, on thy ink-bottle, on thy books; on the wall hung a little blue silk cushion for thy watch, given to thee at the hour of parting by a kind, sentimental little German governess with blonde curls and small blue eyes; sometimes an old friend from Moscow dropped in to see thee, and wrought thee to ecstasy by other people's verses, or even by his own; but solitude, the intolerable slavery of the teacher's calling, the impossibility of winning freedom, the endless autumns and winters, importunate illness. . . . Poor, poor Avenír!

I visited Sorokoúmoff not long before his death. He was hardly able to walk. Squire Gur Kupryánikoff did not eject him from his house, but he ceased to pay him any salary, and hired another tutor for Zyózo. . . . Fófa had been sent off to the cadet school. Avenír was sitting by his window, in an old Voltaire chair. The weather was magnificent. The bright autumnal sky gleamed blue above the dark-brown row of naked lindens; here and there the last bright-yellow leaves on them were rustling and whispering. The earth, penetrated with frost, was sweating and thawing in the sun; its slanting

crimson rays beat obliquely on the pale grass; one felt conscious of a slight crackling in the air; the voices of the labourers resounded clearly and intelligibly in the garden. Avenír wore an old Bukhará dressing-gown; a green neckerchief cast a deathly hue upon his dreadfully emaciated face. He was extremely delighted to see me, stretched out his hand, and began to speak, and to cough. I allowed him to quiet down, and seated myself beside him. . . . On Avenír's lap lay a note-book filled with poems of Koltzóff, carefully copied; he tapped it with the other hand. "There was a poet," he faltered, with an effort repressing his cough, and tried to declaim, in a barely audible voice:

"Or hath the falcon
Fettered wings?
Or are his paths
All ordered?"

I stopped him: the doctor had forbidden him to talk. I knew what would please him. Sorokoúmoff had never, as the saying is, "kept in touch" with science, but he was curious to know what the great minds had done, and how far they had got now. He would, sometimes, take a comrade off in one corner, and begin to interrogate him: he would listen, and marvel, and believe him implicitly, and then repeat it all after him. German philosophy in particular possessed a

strong interest for him.—I began to talk to him about Hegel (this happened long ago, as you see). Avenír nodded his head affirmatively, elevated his eyebrows, smiled, whispered: " I understand, I understand . . . . ah! good, good! . . . ." The childlike curiosity of the poor, dying, homeless, and discarded fellow touched me to tears, I admit. I must remark, that Avenír, contrary to the habit of most consumptives, did not deceive himself in the least as to his malady . . . . and what then? He did not sigh, he did not grieve, he did not even once refer to his condition. . . .

Collecting his forces, he talked of Moscow, of his comrades, of Púshkin, of the theatre, and of Russian literature; he recalled our merry-makings, the heated discussions of our circle, with regret he mentioned the names of two or three friends who had died. . . . .

" Dost thou remember Dásha? "—he added at last:—" that was a soul of gold! that was a heart! and how she loved me! . . . . What has become of her now?—I think she must have withered away, gone into a decline, has n't she, poor girl? "

I did not dare to undeceive the sick man,—and, in fact, why should he know that his Dásha was now twice as broad as she was long, and consorted with merchants—with the brothers Kondatchkóff, powdered and painted herself, squealed and wrangled?

" But," I said to myself, as I gazed at his ex-

hausted face, " cannot he be got away from here? Perhaps there is still a possibility of curing him . . . ." But Avenír did not permit me to finish my proposal.

" No, brother, thanks,"—he said:—" it makes no difference where I die. I certainly shall not survive until the winter. . . . Why disturb people unnecessarily? I have become accustomed to this house. To tell the truth, the master and mistress here are . . . ."

" Are unkind, thou meanest? " I interpolated.

" No, not unkind! they are wooden creatures, somehow. However, I cannot complain of them. There are neighbours: Landed Proprietor Kasátkin has a daughter, a cultivated, amiable, extremely kind young girl . . . . not proud . . . ."

Again Sorokoúmoff had a fit of coughing.

" Nothing would matter,"—he went on, after resting:—" if I were only permitted to smoke my pipe. . . . But I 'm not going to die like this. I will smoke my pipe! "—he added, with a sly wink.—" Thank God, I 've lived enough, enough. I 've known good people. . . ."

" But thou shouldst write to thy relatives,"—I interrupted him.

" What 's the good of writing to my relatives? So far as helping is concerned,—they won't help me; when I die, they will hear of it. But what 's the use of talking about this. . . . Tell me, rather, what hast thou seen abroad? "

I began to narrate. He fairly bored his eyes into me. Toward evening I went away, and ten days later I received the following letter from Mr. Kupryánikoff:

"I have the honour to inform you herewith, my dear sir, that your friend, the student Mr. Avenír Sorokoúmoff, who resided in my house, died three days ago, at two o'clock in the afternoon, and was buried to-day in my parish church at my expense. He requested me to send you the accompanying seven books and note-books. It turned out that he had twenty-two rubles and a half, which, together with his remaining things, become the property of his relatives. Your friend died perfectly conscious, and, I may say, with equal lack of feeling, without having displayed any signs whatsoever of regret, even when our entire family bade him farewell. My consort, Kleopátra Alexándrovna, sends you her compliments. The death of your friend could not fail to have an effect upon her nerves; so far as I am concerned, I am well, thank God, and have the honour to be—

Your most humble servant
G. Kupryánikoff."

Many other instances occur to my mind,—but it would be impossible to recount them all. I will confine myself to one.

An aged landed proprietress died in my presence. The priest began to read over her the prayers for a departing soul, but suddenly observed that she was actually dying, and with all haste

gave her the cross to kiss. The lady thrust it aside impatiently. "Why art thou in such a hurry, bátiushka?"—she said with her sluggish tongue:—"thou wilt have plenty of time." . . . She kissed the cross, tried to thrust her hand under the pillow, and drew her last breath. Under the pillow lay a silver ruble: she wanted to pay the priest for her own prayer-service. . . .

Yes, wonderful is the way in which Russians die!

IV

THE SINGERS

The small village of Kolotóvka, which formerly belonged to a landed proprietress who was known throughout the neighbourhood as the Planer on account of her energetic and evil disposition (her real name remained unknown), but now the property of some Petersburg Germans or other, lies on the slope of a bare hill, intersected from top to bottom by a frightful ravine, which, yawning like a bottomless pit, winds its way, cleft and excavated by torrents, through the very middle of the street, and separates the two sides of the poor little hamlet worse than a river,—for across a river a bridge may, at least, be built. A few spindling willows timidly descend its sandy slopes; at the very bottom, dry and yellow as brass, lie huge slabs of clayey stone. The aspect is cheerless, there 's no denying that,—and yet, all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood are well acquainted with the road to Kolotóvka: they resort thither often and gladly.

At the very apex of the ravine, a few paces

from the point where it has its beginning as a narrow cleft, stands a tiny four-square cottage,—alone, apart from the rest. It is roofed with straw thatch, and has a chimney; one window is turned to the ravine, like a vigilant eye, and on winter evenings, illuminated from within, it is visible from afar, athwart the dim mist of the frost, and twinkles forth as a guiding star to many a wayfaring peasant. Over the door of the cottage a blue board is nailed up: this cot is a dram-shop, called "The Prítynny."[1] Probably the liquor in this dram-shop is not sold for any less than the current price, but it is much more diligently frequented than all the other establishments of the same character in the vicinity. Nikolái Iványitch, the tapster, is the cause.

Nikolái Iványitch, once upon a time a slender, curly-haired, rosy-cheeked young fellow, but now a remarkably obese man, already turning grey, with a face swimming in fat, cunning but good-natured little eyes, and a fleshy brow, intersected by thread-like wrinkles, has been living in Kolotóvka for more than twenty years. Nikolái Iványitch is a smart, shrewd man, like the majority of dram-shop keepers. Without being distinguished by any special amiability or loquacity, he possesses the gift of attracting and retaining his patrons, who, for some reason, find it particu-

[1] Any place where people are fond of assembling, any agreeable (priyátny) place, is called "prítynny."

larly jolly to sit in front of his counter, beneath the calm and cordial, though keen gaze of the phlegmatic host. He has a great deal of common sense; he is well acquainted with the ways of the gentry and of the peasantry and of the burghers; in difficulties, he might give advice which was far from stupid, but, as a cautious man and an egoist, he prefers not to interfere, and, at most, merely by distant hints uttered as though wholly devoid of intention, will he guide his patrons—and even then only his favourite patrons —into the way of truth. He is a good judge of everything which is important or interesting to the Russian man: of horses and cattle, of forests and of bricks, of crockery and dry-goods and leather wares, of songs and dances. When he has no guests, he generally sits, like a sack, on the ground in front of his cottage, with his thin legs tucked up under him, and exchanges affable remarks with all the passers-by. He has seen a great deal in his day, he has outlived scores of petty gentry who have come to him for "alcohol," he knows everything that is going on for a hundred versts round about, and never blurts it out, never even has the appearance of knowing that which not even the most penetrating commissioner of rural police so much as suspects. He minds his own business, holds his tongue, smiles to himself, and shifts his drinking-glasses about. The neighbours respect him. The ci-

vilian General[1] Shshtcherspeténko, the leading squire of the district as to rank, always nods condescendingly to him whenever he passes his little house. Nikolái Iványitch is a man of influence: he forced a well-known horse-thief to restore a horse which he had abstracted from the yard of one of his acquaintances, he brought to their senses the peasants of a neighbouring village who were unwilling to accept a new manager, and so forth. But it must not be supposed that he did this out of love for justice, out of zeal for his neighbours —no! he simply endeavours to prevent anything which may in any way disturb his tranquillity. Nikolái Iványitch is married, and has children. His wife, an alert, sharp-nosed, and quick-eyed woman of the burgher class, has also grown rather heavy in body of late, like her husband. He relies upon her thoroughly, and she keeps their money under lock and key. Boisterous drunkards fear her; she is not fond of them: there is little profit from them, but much uproar; the silent, surly sort are more to her taste. Nikolái Iványitch's children are still small; all the first-born have died, but the rest resemble their parents: it is a pleasure to look at the clever faces of these robust youngsters.

[1] According to Peter the Great's famous Table of Ranks, civilians hold military titles (though they are rarely used, except in the case of "general") which correspond with the grade they have attained. In order of precedence, the "generals" run as follows: Actual Privy Councillor corresponds to General of Cavalry, Infantry, or Artillery; Privy Councillor, to Lieutenant-General; Actual Councillor of State, to Major-General.—Translator.

It was an intolerably hot July day, when, slowly putting one foot before the other, and accompanied by my dog, I made my way upward along the Kolotóvka ravine in the direction of the Prítynny dram-shop. The sun was blazing in the sky, as though in a furious rage; it stewed and baked one unremittingly; the air was impregnated with stifling dust. The daws and crows, covered with gloss, with gaping bills stared at the passers-by, as though entreating their sympathy; the sparrows were the only ones who did not grieve, and puffing out their feathers, they twittered more violently than ever, and fought in the hedges, flew amicably from the dusty road, and soared in grey clouds above the green patches of hemp. I was suffering tortures from thirst. There was no water near; in Kolotóvka, as in many other villages of the steppes, the peasants drink a sort of liquid mud from the pond, in default of springs or wells. . . . But who would call that repulsive beverage water? I wanted to ask Nikolái Iványitch for a glass of beer or kvas.

I must admit that Kolotóvka does not present a very cheerful spectacle at any season of the year; but it arouses a particularly sad feeling when the glittering July sun with its pitiless rays is heating the dark-brown, half-dispersed thatches of the houses, and that deep ravine, and the burnt-up, dusty pasture, across which hopelessly wander gaunt, long-legged hens, and the grey, aspen framework with holes in lieu of windows,

the remnant of the former manor-house, completely overgrown with nettles, steppe-grass, and wormwood, and covered with goose-down, the black pond, red-hot as it were, with a fringe of half-dried mud, and a dam, twisted awry, by whose side, on the ash-like soil, trodden fine, sheep, barely breathing and sneezing with the dust, sadly huddle close to one another, and with dejected patience bow their heads as though waiting for that intolerable heat to pass off at last. With weary steps I approached the abode of Nikolái Ivánitch, evoking in the small brats, as was proper, a surprise which rose to the pitch of strainedly-irrational stares, and in the dogs wrath which was expressed by barking so hoarse and vicious, that it seemed as though all their entrails were being torn out of them, and they themselves coughed and panted after it,—when, all of a sudden, on the threshold of the dram-shop there made his appearance a peasant of lofty stature, capless, in a frieze cloak, girt low with a sky-blue girdle. From his appearance, he seemed to be a house-servant; his thick grey hair rose in disorder above his lean, wrinkled face. He called some one, hurriedly gesticulating with his arms, which, evidently, made more sweeping flourishes than he himself intended. It was obvious that he had already succeeded in getting intoxicated.

"Come along, come along, I say!"—he stammered, elevating his thick eyebrows with an ef-

fort:—" come along, Blinker, come along! deuce take thee, my good fellow, thou fairly crawlest, upon my word. 'T is not well, my good fellow. They are waiting for thee, and here thou art crawling. . . . Come along."

" Well, I 'm coming, I 'm coming,"—resounded a quavering voice, and from behind the cottage, on the right, a short, fat, lame man made his appearance. He wore a fairly clean woollen overcoat, with his arm in one sleeve only; a tall, conical cap, pulled straight down to his brows, imparted to his round, plump face a sly and jeering expression. His small, yellow eyes fairly darted about, a repressed, constrained smile never left his lips, and his long, sharp nose projected audaciously in front like a rudder.—" I 'm coming, my dear fellow,"—he went on, hobbling in the direction of the dram-shop:—" why dost thou call me? . . . Who is waiting for me? "

" Why do I call thee? "—said the man in the frieze coat, reproachfully.—" Thou 'rt a queer fellow, Blinker: thou art called to the dram-shop, and thou askest: ' Why? ' Good men are waiting for thee: Turk-Yáshka, and Wild Gentleman, and the contractor from Zhísdra. Yáshka and the contractor have made a bet: they have wagered a gallon of beer as to which one of them will outdo the other,—that is to say, which will sing the best. . . . . Dost understand? "

"Is Yáshka going to sing?"—said the man called Blinker, with vivacity,—"And art not thou lying, Ninny?"

"I 'm not lying,"—replied The Ninny, with dignity:—"but thou art talking crazy nonsense. Of course he 's going to sing, if he has made a bet, thou lady-bug, thou rogue, Blinker!"

"Well, come on then, silly," retorted Blinker.

"Come, kiss me at least, my darling,"—stammered The Ninny, opening his arms widely.

"Pshaw, what a tender Æsop,"—replied Blinker, scornfully, repulsing him with his elbow, and both, bending down, entered the low-browed door.

The conversation I had overheard powerfully excited my curiosity. More than once rumours had reached me about Turk-Yáshka as the best singer in the vicinity, and an opportunity had now presented itself to me to hear him in competition with another master of the art. I redoubled my pace, and entered the establishment. In all probability, not many of my readers have had a chance to take a peep at country dram-shops; but into what places do not we sportsmen enter! Their arrangement is extremely simple. They usually consist of a dark anteroom and a light cottage, separated into two divisions by a partition, behind which no visitor has the right to go. In this partition, above the broad, oaken table, a large, oblong opening is made. On the table or

counter the liquor is sold. Sealed square bottles of various sizes stand in rows on shelves, directly opposite the aperture. In the central part of the cottage, designed for patrons, are benches, two or three empty casks, and a corner table. The majority of country dram-shops are rather dark, and almost never will you see on their board walls any of the brilliantly coloured cheap pictures which are lacking in very few cottages.

When I entered the Prítynny dram-shop, a fairly numerous company was already assembled there.

Behind the counter, as was proper, almost to the full extent of the aperture, Nikolái Ivánitch was standing in a gay-coloured cotton shirt and with a languid smile on his plump cheeks, and pouring out with his fat, white hands two glasses of liquor for the friends who had just entered, Blinker and The Ninny; and behind him, in the corner, near the window, his brisk-eyed wife was to be seen. In the middle of the room stood Yáshka-the-Turk, a spare and well-built man of three-and-twenty years, clad in a long-tailed nankeen kaftan, blue in colour. He looked like a dashing factory-hand, and, apparently, could not boast of very robust health. His sunken cheeks, his large, uneasy grey eyes, his straight nose with thin, mobile nostrils, his white receding brow, with light chestnut curls tossed back, his large but handsome and expressive lips—his whole counte-

nance denoted an impressionable and passionate man. He was in a state of great excitement: his eyes were winking hard, he was breathing irregularly, his hands were trembling as though with fever,—and he really had a fever, that palpitating, sudden fever which is so familiar to all people who speak or sing before an audience. Beside him stood a man about forty years of age, broad-shouldered, with broad cheek-bones, and a low brow, narrow Tatár eyes, a short, thick nose, a square chin, and shining black hair as stiff as bristles. The expression of his swarthy and leaden-hued face, especially of his pallid lips, might have been designated as almost fierce, had it not been so composedly-meditative. He hardly stirred, and only slowly glanced around him, like an ox from beneath his yoke. He was dressed in some sort of a threadbare coat with smooth, brass buttons; an old, black silk kerchief encircled his huge neck. He was called the Wild Gentleman. Directly opposite him, on the bench, beneath the holy pictures, sat Yáshka's competitor,—the contractor from Zhísdra: he was a thick-set peasant, low of stature, aged thirty, pockmarked and curly-haired, with a stubby, snub nose, small, lively brown eyes, and a small, thin beard. He cast bold glances about him, with his hands tucked under him, chattered incessantly, and kept tapping with his feet, which were shod in dandified boots with a border.

He wore a new, thin armyák [1] of grey cloth, with a velveteen collar, against which the edge of a scarlet shirt, closely buttoned around the throat, stood out sharply. In the opposite corner, to the right of the door, at the table, an insignificant little peasant was sitting, clad in a scant, threadbare smock-frock with a huge hole in the shoulder. The sunlight streamed in a thin, yellowish flood through the dusty panes of two tiny windows, and, apparently, could not conquer the habitual gloom of the room: all the objects were scantily illuminated,—in spots, as it were. On the other hand, it was almost cool there, and the sensation of suffocation and sultry heat slipped from my shoulders, like a burden, as soon as I had stepped across the threshold.

My arrival—I could see it—somewhat disconcerted Nikolái Iványitch's guests at first; but, perceiving that he bowed to me, as to an acquaintance, they recovered their composure, and paid no further attention to me. I ordered some beer, and seated myself in the corner, beside the peasant in the torn smock.

"Well, what now!"—suddenly roared The Ninny, tossing off a glass of beer at one gulp, and accompanying his exclamation with the same strange flourishing of the hands, without which,

[1] A coat which is fitted as far as the waist-line, folds diagonally across the front, and has considerable fullness imparted to the tails by plaits inserted at the waist where the curving seams from the shoulders join the skirt.—TRANSLATOR.

evidently, he never uttered a single word.—"What are we waiting for? If you 're going to begin, why begin. Hey? Yáshka? . . ."

"Begin, begin,"—chimed in Nikolái Iványitch, approvingly.

"We will begin, if you like,"—said the contractor, coolly, and with a self-satisfied smile:—"I 'm ready."

"And I 'm ready,"—enunciated Yákoff, with agitation.

"Well, begin, my lads, begin," piped Blinker.

But, despite the unanimously expressed desire, no one did begin; the contractor did not even rise from his bench,—all seemed to be waiting for something.

"Begin!"—said the Wild Gentleman, sharply and morosely.

Yákoff gave a start. The contractor rose, pulled down his girdle, and cleared his throat.

"But who 's to begin?"—he asked, in a slightly altered voice of the Wild Gentleman, who still continued to stand motionless in the middle of the room, with his thick legs straddled far apart, and his mighty arms thrust into the pockets of his full trousers almost to the elbow.

"Thou, thou, contractor,"—lisped The Ninny,—"thou, my good fellow."

The Wild Gentleman darted a sidelong glance at him. The Ninny gave a faint squeak, grew

confused, stared at some point on the ceiling, twitched his shoulders, and relapsed into silence.

"Cast lots,"—said the Wild Gentleman with a pause between his words:—"and let the measure of beer be placed on the counter."

Nikolái Iványitch bent down, picked up the measure from the floor, with a grunt, and set it on the table.

The Wild Gentleman glanced at Yákoff, and said: "Go ahead!"

Yákoff fumbled in his pockets, drew forth a two-kopék piece, and bit a mark in it. The contractor pulled from beneath the tails of his kaftan a new leathern purse, deliberately untied the cords, and pouring out a quantity of small change into his hand, selected a new two-kopék bit. The Ninny held out his well-worn cap, with its broken and ripped visor; Yákoff tossed his coin into it, and the contractor tossed in his.

"'T is for thee to draw,"—said the Wild Gentleman, turning to Blinker.

Blinker laughed in a self-satisfied way, took the cap in both hands, and began to shake it.

Instantaneously a profound silence reigned: the coins, faintly jingling, clinked against each other. I cast an attentive glance around: all faces expressed strained expectation; the Wild Gentleman himself screwed up his eyes; my neighbour, the wretched little peasant in the torn smock, even craned out his neck with curiosity.

Blinker thrust his hand into the cap and drew out the contractor's coin; all heaved a sigh. Yákoff flushed scarlet, and the contractor passed his hand over his hair.

"There, did n't I say that thou shouldst begin,"—exclaimed The Ninny. "I told you so!"

"Well, well, don't squawk,"[1]—remarked the Wild Gentleman, disdainfully. "Begin,"—he added, nodding his head at the contractor.

"What song shall I sing?"—inquired the contractor, becoming flustered.

"Whatever one thou wilt,"—replied Blinker. —"Whatever song comes into thy head, sing that."

"Whatever one thou pleasest, of course,"—added Nikolái Iványitch, slowly folding his arms on his chest.—"There 's no decree for thee on that matter. Sing what thou wilt; only, sing well; and afterward, we will decide according to our consciences."

"According to our consciences, of course,"—put in The Ninny, and licked the rim of his empty glass.

"Let me clear my throat a bit, my good fellows,"—began the contractor, drawing his fingers along the collar of his kaftan.

"Come, come, don't dawdle—begin!"—said the Wild Gentleman, with decision, and dropped his eyes.

[1] Hawks squawk when they are frightened by anything.

The contractor reflected a while, shook his head, and advanced a pace. Yákoff riveted his eyes upon him. . . .

But before I enter upon a description of the contest itself, I consider it not superfluous to say a few words about each of the acting personages of my tale. The life of several of them was already known to me, when I encountered them in the Prítynny dram-shop; I collected information concerning the others later on.

Let us begin with The Ninny. This man's real name was Evgráf Ivánoff; but no one in all the country round about called him anything but The Ninny, and he alluded to himself by this nickname also: so well did it fit him. And, as a matter of fact, nothing could have been better suited to his insignificant, eternally alarmed features. He was an idle, unmarried house-serf, who had very long since been discarded by his owners, and who, although he had no duties and received not a penny of wages, found the means, nevertheless, to indulge in daily sprees at other people's expense. He had a multitude of acquaintances, who treated him to liquor and to tea, without themselves knowing why they did so, because he not only was not entertaining in company, but even, on the contrary, bored every one with his senseless chatter, his unbearable insolence, his feverish movements and incessant, unnatural laughter. He could neither sing nor dance; in all

his life he had not uttered a witty nor even a sensible word: he did nothing but "tipple" and lie at random—a regular ninny! And yet, not a single drinking-bout took place within a circuit of forty versts without his long-limbed figure turning up among the guests,—so wonted had they become to him, and so tolerant of his presence as an inevitable evil. He was treated scornfully, it is true, but no one except the Wild Gentleman knew how to put a stop to his inopportune outbursts.

Blinker did not in the least resemble The Ninny. The name Blinker suited him also, although he did not blink his eyes more than other people: 't is a well-known fact that the Russian populace are master-hands at bestowing nicknames. Despite my efforts to investigate more circumstantially the past of this man, there yet remained for me—and, probably, for others also—dark spots in his life, places, as the men learned in book-lore express it, veiled in the profound gloom of obscurity. All I found out was, that he had formerly been the coachman of an old, childless landed proprietress, had absconded with the team of three horses entrusted to him, had disappeared for a whole year, and having become convinced by experience, it is to be presumed, of the disadvantages and miseries of a vagabond existence, had returned of his own accord, but lame, had flung himself at the feet of his mistress, and,

having for the space of several years atoned for his crime by exemplary conduct, had gradually got into her good graces, had at last won her complete confidence, had been made overseer, and after the death of his mistress now turned out to have been emancipated, no one knew how, had inscribed himself in the burgher class, had begun to hire ground for raising melons and cucumbers from the neighbours, had grown rich, and now lived in clover. He was a man of experience, opinionated, neither good-natured nor malicious, but calculating, rather; he was a cunning rogue, acquainted with men's ways, and knew how to take advantage of them. He was cautious and, at the same time, enterprising, like a fox; loquacious as an old woman, yet never made a slip of the tongue, while he made every one else betray himself in speech; moreover, he did not pretend to be a simpleton, as some crafty persons of the same stamp do; and, indeed, it would have been difficult for him to dissimulate: I have never seen more piercing and clever eyes than his tiny, crafty "peepers."[1] They never simply looked—they were always watching or spying out. Blinker would sometimes consider for weeks at a stretch some apparently simple undertaking, and then suddenly decide upon some desperately-bold operation, in

[1] The people of the Orel (Aryól) Government call eyes "peepers," as they call the mouth "the eater."

which, to all appearances, he was sure to break his neck . . . . . And the first you knew,—everything had turned out a success, everything was running as though on oiled wheels. He was lucky, and believed in his luck, and believed in omens. Altogether, he was very superstitious. He was not beloved, because he cared nothing for any one, but he was respected. His entire family consisted of one small son, whom he fairly adored, and who, reared by such a father, would in all probability go far. "Little Blinker" (Morgatchónok) "takes after his father," the old people already said of him, with bated breath, as they sat on the earthen banks around the cottages and chatted among themselves on summer evenings; and everybody understood what that meant, and added not a word more.

There is no necessity for occupying ourselves long with Yákoff-the-Turk and the contractor. Yákoff, nicknamed the Turk, because he really was descended from a Turkish woman captive, was in soul an artist in every sense of the word, and by profession a moulder in the paper-mill of a merchant; as for the contractor, he seemed to me to be a resourceful and dashing town-dweller of the burgher class. But it is worth while to speak in more detail concerning the Wild Gentleman.

The first impression which the aspect of this man made upon you was a sensation of some

coarse, heavy but irresistible force. He was awkwardly built, "flung together," as our expression runs, but he exhaled an atmosphere of invincible health, and, strange to say, his ursine figure was not devoid of a certain peculiar grace, emanating, possibly, from perfectly composed confidence in his own might. It was difficult to decide, off-hand, to what social class this Hercules belonged; he resembled neither a house-serf nor a burgher, nor an impoverished pettifogger out of a job, nor a ruined nobleman of small estate—a keeper of dogs and bully: in truth, he was a unique specimen. No one knew whence he had descended upon our district; it was said that his ancestors had been peasant-freeholders,[1] and it was supposed that he had formerly been in the government service somewhere, but no one knew anything definite in regard to that; and from whom were they to find out—certainly not from the man himself: there never was a more taciturn and surly person. Moreover, no one could say with authority what were his means of subsistence; he occupied himself with no handicraft, he visited no one, he knew hardly any one, yet he was supplied with money,—not much, to tell the truth, but enough. His demeanour was not precisely unassuming,—on the whole, there was nothing unassuming about him,—but quiet: he lived as though he did not notice any one around him,

[1] See the sketch in Vol. I, "Freeholder Ovsyánikoff," p. 98.

and decidedly stood in no need of any one. The Wild Gentleman (such was the nickname which had been conferred upon him; but his real name was Perevlyésoff) enjoyed immense influence throughout the whole countryside; people yielded him instantaneous and willing obedience, although he not only had no shadow of right to issue orders to any one whomsoever, but did not even manifest the slightest pretensions to the obedience of the people with whom he came into contact. He spoke,—he was obeyed; power always asserts its rights. He drank hardly any liquor, did not consort with women, and was passionately fond of singing. There was a great deal that was mysterious about this man; it seemed as though some vast forces or other were morosely reposing within him, as though aware that, having once risen up, having once broken loose, they were bound to destroy both themselves and everything with which they should come into contact; and I am greatly mistaken, if such an outburst had not already taken place in that man's life, if he, taught by experience and barely rescued from perdition, were not now holding a very tight rein over himself. What especially struck me in him was the mixture of a certain innate, natural fierceness and an equally innate nobility,—a mixture which I have never encountered in any one else.

So then, the contractor stepped forward, half-

closed his eyes, and began to sing in a high falsetto. His voice was tolerably agreeable and sweet, although somewhat husky; he played with his voice and flung it about like a whirligig, incessantly trilling and executing roulades in a descending scale, and incessantly returning to his upper notes, which he held and drew out with peculiar pains, then paused, and again suddenly took up his former refrain with a certain daring, spirited dash. His transitions were sometimes quite bold, sometimes quite amusing: they would have afforded connoisseurs great satisfaction; a German would have been enraged by them. He was a Russian *tenore di grazia, tenor léger*. He sang a merry dance-tune, the words of which, so far as I could make them out amid the interminable ornamentation, the supplementary consonants and exclamations, were as follows:

> "I 'll plough, will I, the stripling young,
> A little patch of ground:
> I 'll sow, will I, the stripling young,
> A little flower of scarlet hue."

He sang; all listened to him with great attention. He evidently felt that he had to deal with people who were good judges, and therefore, as the saying is, he fairly "crawled out of his skin" in his efforts. As a matter of fact, people in our parts are good judges of singing, and not with-

out cause is the village of Sérgievskoe, on the great Orel highway, renowned throughout the whole of Russia for its peculiarly agreeable and harmonious melody. For a long time the contractor continued to sing, without evoking any special sympathy in his hearers.

He lacked the support of a chorus; at last, at one particularly successful passage, which made even the Wild Gentleman smile, The Ninny could contain himself no longer, and shouted aloud with delight. Every one gave a start. The Ninny and Blinker began to hum in an undertone, to accompany him, and to shout: "That 's a dandy! . . . . . Go ahead, thou rascal! . . . Go ahead, keep on, thou brigand! Lash out again! Split thy throat again, thou dog, thou hound! . . . Let Herod slay thy soul!" . . . and so forth. Nikolái Iványitch, behind his counter, nodded his head to right and left in approbation. At last, The Ninny began to stamp his feet, to shift from foot to foot, and to twitch his shoulders,—and Yákoff's eyes fairly blazed up like coals of fire, and he quivered all over like a leaf, and smiled flabbily. The Wild Gentleman alone did not change countenance, and, as before, did not stir from his seat; but his gaze, riveted upon the contractor, became somewhat softer, although the expression of his lips remained scornful. Encouraged by these tokens of universal approval, the contractor became a perfect whirlwind, and

began to emit such *fioriture,* clicked and drummed so with his tongue, made his throat perform such frantic feats, that when, at last, exhausted, pale, and drenched in boiling perspiration, he threw his whole body backward and gave vent to a final expiring outcry, a general unanimous shout responded to him in a vehement outburst. The Ninny flung himself upon his neck, and began to choke him with his long, bony arms; on Nikolái Iványitch's fat face a flush broke forth, and he seemed to have grown young again; Yákoff shouted like a madman: "Well done! well done!"[1]—even my neighbour, the peasant in the torn smock, could not contain himself, and smiting the table with his fist, he shouted: "A-ha! good, devil take it—'t is good!"—and spat decisively to one side.

"Well, brother, thou hast diverted us!"—cried The Ninny, without releasing the exhausted contractor from his embrace,—"thou hast diverted us, there 's no denying that! Thou hast won, brother, thou hast won! I congratulate thee,—the measure of beer is thine! Yáshka is far behind thee. . . . Just mark what I am saying to thee: thou 'rt far ahead of him. . . . Believe me!" (And again he clasped the contractor to his breast.)

"Come, let him go, let him go, thou nui-

[1] Literally: "Fine, dashing young fellow." Possibly, "Bully for you!" would be the more accurate translation.—TRANSLATOR.

sance . . ." said Blinker, with vexation:—" let him sit down on the bench; dost not thou see he 's tired! . . . What a ninny thou art, my good fellow,—really, a ninny! Why dost thou stick to him like a bath-leaf? " [1]

" Well, all right, let him sit down, and I 'll drink to his health,"—said The Ninny, stepping up to the counter.—" At thy expense, brother,"—he added, addressing the contractor.

The latter nodded in assent, seated himself on the bench, pulled a towel out of his cap, and began to mop his face; but The Ninny, with greedy haste, drained his glass, and, according to the custom of confirmed drunkards, he assumed a grieved and careworn aspect.

" Thou singest well, brother, well,"—remarked Nikolái Iványitch, caressingly.—" And now 't is thy turn, Yáshka: look out, don't be timid. Let 's see who 's who; let 's see. . . But the contractor sings well,—by heaven, he does! "

" Very well, indeed,"—remarked Nikolái Iványitch's wife, glancing at Yákoff with a smile.

" Very well indee-ed! " repeated my neighbour, in an undertone.

" Hey, Savage-Polyékha! " [2] suddenly roared

[1] The usual bath-besom, for agreeable massage after the steam-bath, is a fan-like bunch of birch-branches, with the leaves left on, and dipped in hot water to prevent their falling off. Sometimes the peasants use bunches of nettles.—Translator.

[2] The inhabitants of southern Polyésye are called Polyékhi. The Polyésye is a long forest tract which begins at the boundary of the Bolkhóff and Zhízdra districts. Its inhabitants are distin-

The Ninny, and stalking up to the peasant with the hole on his shoulder, he pointed his finger at him, began to skip about, and burst into a peal of laughter. — "A Polyékha! a Polyékha! Ha, *bádye,*[1] drive on, Savage? Why hast thou favoured us with thy company?" he shouted, through his laughter. The poor peasant was disconcerted, and was making ready to rise and depart as speedily as possible, when suddenly the Wild Gentleman's brazen voice rang out:

"Why, what intolerable animal is this?"—he ejaculated, gnashing his teeth.

"I did n't do anything," — mumbled The Ninny:—"I did n't do anything. . . . I only just . . . ."

"Well, very good, hold thy tongue!"—retorted the Wild Gentleman.—"Yákoff, begin!"

Yákoff clutched his throat with his hand.

"Well, brother, you know . . . somehow . . . H'm . . . . I don't know, really, somehow, you know . . . ."

"Come, have done with that, don't get frightened. Art ashamed? . . . Why dost thou wriggle? Sing as God prompts thee."

And the Wild Gentleman lowered his eyes in anticipation.

guished by many peculiarities in their manner of life, customs, and dialect. They are called savages because of their suspicious and dull disposition.

[1] The Polyékhi add the exclamation "ha!" to nearly every word, also "bádye." The Ninny says "panyái" instead of "pogonyái" ("drive on"), also in mimicry.

Yákoff held his peace for a little, cast a glance round him, and covered his face with his hand. Every one fairly bored into him with his eyes, especially the contractor, upon whose countenance, athwart his wonted self-assurance, and the triumph of success, there broke forth a faint, involuntary uneasiness. He leaned back against the wall and again tucked both his hands under him, but he no longer swung his feet to and fro. When, at last, Yákoff uncovered his face, it was pale as that of a corpse, and his eyes barely gleamed through his lowered lashes. He heaved a deep sigh, and began to sing. . . . The first sound of his voice was weak and uneven, and, apparently, did not emanate from his chest, but was wafted from some distant place, as though it had flown accidentally into the room. This tremulous, ringing sound had a strange effect on all of us; we glanced at one another, and Nikolái Iványitch's wife actually straightened herself up. This first sound was followed by another, more firm and prolonged, but still obviously tremulous, like a chord when, suddenly resounding beneath a strong finger, it quivers with a final, expiring tremor; the second note was followed by a third, and, gradually, warming up and broadening, a melancholy song poured forth.

"Not one path alone in the field is trodden,"

he sang, and we all felt sweetness and sadness in our hearts. I am bound to confess, that rarely have I heard such a voice: it was slightly broken, and had a cracked ring; at first it even had a sort of sickly sound; but it contained both genuine and profound passion, and youth, and power, and sweetness, and a certain captivatingly-care-free, despondent pain. An upright, burning, Russian soul resounded and breathed in it, and fairly gripped our hearts, laid hold directly upon their Russian chords. The song swelled and broadened. Yákoff, evidently, had been seized with a fit of rapture; he was no longer timid, he surrendered himself wholly to his bliss; his voice no longer trembled,—it quivered, but with that barely perceptible inward quiver of passion, which pierces the soul of the hearer like an arrow, and grew constantly stronger, firmer, more voluminous. I remember having seen, once upon a time, of an evening, at ebb-tide, on the flat, sandy shore of the sea, which was roaring menacingly and heavily in the distance, a large white sea-gull; it was sitting motionless, with its silky breast exposed to the crimson glow of the sunset, and only now and then did it slowly spread its long wings in the direction of its familiar ocean, toward the purpling sun: I recalled that sea-gull as I listened to Yákoff. He sang on, utterly oblivious of his rival, and of us all, but evidently upborne, like a vigorous swimmer by the waves,

by our silent, passionate interest. He sang, and every sound of his voice breathed forth something which was akin to us, and boundlessly vast, as though the familiar steppes were unrolling themselves before us, stretching out into the illimitable distance. I felt that tears were gathering in my heart, and welling up into my eyes; dull, suppressed sobs suddenly startled me. . . . . I glanced around—the publican's wife was weeping, bent forward, with her bosom against the window. Yákoff shot a swift glance at her, and began to warble even more sweetly than before. Nikolái Iványitch dropped his eyes; Blinker turned away; The Ninny, completely melted, stood with his mouth stupidly agape; the grey little peasant was sobbing softly in his corner, shaking his head with a bitter whisper; and across the iron face of the Wild Gentleman, from beneath his brows, which were completely contracted in a frown, a heavy tear was trickling slowly; the contractor raised his clenched fist to his brow, and did not stir. . . . I know not in what the universal anguish would have culminated, had not Yákoff suddenly wound up on a high, remarkably thin note—as though his voice had broken off short. No one cried out, no one even stirred; all seemed to be waiting to see whether he would not sing some more; but he opened his eyes, as though surprised at our silence, surveyed us all with an inquiring glance, and saw that the victory was his. . . .

"Yáshka,"—said the Wild Gentleman, laying his hand on his shoulder, and—said no more.

We all stood as though stunned. The contractor rose softly, and stepped up to Yákoff.—"Thou . . . . thy . . . . thou hast won,"—he enunciated at last with difficulty, and rushed headlong from the room.

His swift, decisive movement seemed to break the spell: all suddenly began to talk noisily, joyously. The Ninny gave an upward leap, stammered, fluttered his arms like the wings of a windmill; Blinker hobbled up to Yákoff and began to kiss him; Nikolái Iványitch half rose, and solemnly announced that he would add an extra measure of beer on his account. The Wild Gentleman laughed with a good-natured sort of laugh, which I had never expected to encounter on his face; the wretched little peasant kept reiterating in his corner, as he wiped his eyes, cheeks, nose, and beard with both his sleeves: "But 't is good,—by heaven, 't is good! Well, now, I 'll renounce my parents and become a dog if it is n't good!" while Nikolái Iványitch's wife, all flushed, rose hastily and withdrew. Yákoff enjoyed his victory like a child; his whole face was transfigured; his eyes, in particular, fairly beamed with happiness. He was dragged to the counter; he called to him the tear-sodden peasant, despatched the tapster's little son for the contractor, whom the boy did not find, however, and the carouse began.—"Thou wilt sing for us again,

thou wilt sing for us until the evening," The Ninny kept repeating, raising his hands on high.

I cast one more glance at Yákoff, and departed. I did not wish to remain,—I was afraid of spoiling my impression. But the sultry heat was as unbearable as ever. It seemed to be hanging close to the very earth, in a dense, heavy stratum; in the dark-blue sky, certain tiny, bright flames seemed to be whirling about, athwart the very fine, almost black dust. All was silent; there was something hopeless, oppressive in that profound silence of debilitated nature. I wended my way to the hay-loft and lay down on the freshly-mown but already almost dry grass. For a long time I did not fall asleep; for a long time, Yákoff's irresistible voice rang in my ears. . . . . At last the heat and my fatigue asserted their rights, however, and I sank into a death-like slumber. When I awoke, all was dark; the grass scattered round about emitted a strong fragrance, and had grown somewhat damp; through the thin boards of the half-open roof pale little stars were twinkling. I went outside. The sunset glow had long since died out, and its last traces were barely visible, like a white streak on the horizon; but in the air, recently red-hot, warmth was still perceptible athwart the nocturnal coolness, and the lungs still thirsted for a cold blast. There was no breeze, there was not even a cloud;

round about, the sky was perfectly clear and transparently-dark, softly scintillating with innumerable but barely visible stars. Lights gleamed in the village; from the brilliantly-lighted dram-shop hard by was wafted a confused, discordant uproar, amid which it seemed to me that I recognised Yákoff's voice. Shrill laughter arose thence in gusts, from time to time. I stepped up to the tiny window, and pressed my face to the pane. I beheld a cheerless, though motley and lively picture: everybody was drunk —everybody, beginning with Yákoff. He was sitting, with bared breast, on the wall-bench, and singing in a hoarse voice some dancing-tune of the street, as he lazily ran his fingers over and twanged the strings of a guitar. His damp hair hung in elf-locks over his horribly pale face. In the middle of the dram-shop, The Ninny, completely "unscrewed" and minus his kaftan, was dancing with leaps and squattings in front of the peasant in the greyish armyák; the miserable little peasant, in his turn, was stamping and shuffling his enfeebled feet with difficulty, and smiling foolishly through his dishevelled beard, and flourished one hand from time to time, as much as to say: "I don't care a rap for anybody!" Nothing could be more ridiculous than his face: no matter how much he twitched his brows upward, his fatigue-laden lids would not rise, and continued to lie upon the barely perceptible, in-

toxicated, but still very sweet little eyes. He was in the engaging condition of a man who has got thoroughly tipsy, when every passer-by, on glancing at his face, will infallibly say: " 'T is good, brother, 't is good!" Blinker, all scarlet as a crayfish, and with his nostrils widely inflated, was jeering spitefully from a corner; Nikolái Ivánitch alone, as is befitting a genuine publican, preserved his invariable coolness. A number of new individuals had assembled in the room; but I did not see the Wild Gentleman among them.

I turned away, and with swift steps began to descend the hill on which Kolotóvka lies. At the foot of this hill, the broad ravine spreads out; submerged in the misty billows of the evening fog, it appeared more limitless than ever, and seemed to merge into the darkened sky. I was proceeding with great strides on the road which runs along the precipice, when suddenly, far away in the ravine, there rang out the resonant voice of a boy.—" Antrópka! Antrópka-a-a!"—it shouted in persistent and tearful desperation, prolonging the last syllable for a very, very long time.

He stopped for a few moments, and again began to shout. His voice rang out sonorously on the motionless, lightly-slumbering air. Thirty times, at least, had he shouted the name of Antrópka, when suddenly from the opposite end of the field, as though from another world, the barely audible reply was wafted:

" Wha-a-a-aat? "

The boy's voice instantly shouted with joyous wrath:

" Come hither, thou devil, thou forest-fi-i-i-iend! "

" Why-y-y-y? "—replied the second voice, after a long pause.

" Why, because thy daddy wants to spa-a-a-a-ank thee,"—hastily shouted the first voice.

The second voice did not respond again, and again the boy began to call Antrópka. His shouts, which grew ever weaker and more infrequent, still continued to reach my ear, when it had already grown completely dark, and I was doubling the edge of the forest which surrounded my hamlet and was situated four versts from Kolotóvka. . . . .

" Antrópka-a-a! " seemed to be still audible in the air, filled with the shades of night.

V

PIÓTR PETRÓVITCH KARATÁEFF

FIVE years ago, in autumn, I was compelled to sit for almost an entire day in a posting-house on the highway from Moscow to Túla, for lack of horses. I was returning from a hunting-expedition, and had been so incautious as to send my tróïka on ahead. The superintendent, a surly fellow, already aged, with hair which hung over his nose, and tiny, sleepy eyes, replied to all my complaints and requests by a growl, slammed the door wrathfully, as though cursing his own office, and emerging upon the porch, set to berating the postilions, who were slowly tramping through the mud with arches weighing about forty pounds apiece in their arms, or were sitting on the bench, yawning and scratching their heads, and paid no particular attention to the angry exclamations of their superior. I had already set to work three times to drink tea, I had several times vainly endeavoured to get to sleep, I had perused all the inscriptions on the windows and on the walls; I was oppressed by frightful tedium. I was staring with chill and hopeless despair at the upturned shafts of my tarantás, when

suddenly a small bell resounded, and a little cart, drawn by three weary horses, drew up before the porch. The newcomer sprang from his cart, and with the shout: "Horses, and be quick about it!" entered the room. While he listened, with the customary strange surprise, to the superintendent's reply, that there were no horses, I succeeded, with the eager curiosity of a bored man, in scanning my new companion from head to foot with a glance. Apparently, he was about thirty years of age. The smallpox had left ineffaceable traces on his face, which was harsh and yellow, with an unpleasant brazen tint; his long, bluish-black hair fell in rings upon his collar behind, in front it curled in dashing ringlets on the temples; his small, swollen eyes had sight, and that was all; on his upper lip, several small hairs stuck out. He was dressed like a dissolute landed proprietor, a frequenter of horse-fairs, in a flowered Caucasian overcoat, considerably soiled, a faded silk neckerchief of lilac hue, a waistcoat with brass buttons, and grey trousers with huge bell-bottoms, from beneath which the tips of his uncleaned boots were barely visible. He reeked strongly of tobacco and vódka; on his fat, red fingers, which were almost covered by the sleeves of the overcoat, silver and Túla rings of gold and black steel were discernible. Such figures are to be encountered in Russia not by the dozen but by the hundred; acquaintance with them, truth to

tell, does not afford any pleasure whatever, but, in spite of the prejudice wherewith I surveyed the newcomer, I could not but notice the unconcernedly good-natured and passionate expression of his face.

"They [1] have been waiting here for more than an hour, sir,"—said the superintendent, pointing at me.

More than an hour!—The malefactor was making fun of me.

"But perhaps he does not need them so badly,"—replied the newcomer.

"We can't tell about that, sir,"—said the superintendent, surlily.

"And is n't it possible to manage it in some way? Are there positively no horses?"

"Can't be done, sir. There is n't a single horse."

"Well, then, order the samovár to be brought for me. I 'll wait, there 's nothing else to be done."

The newcomer seated himself on the wall-bench, flung his cap on the table, and passed his hand over his hair.

"And have you already drunk tea?"—he asked me.

"Yes."

"Won't you drink again, to keep me company?"

[1] Respectful form for "he."—TRANSLATOR.

I consented. The fat, reddish samovár made its appearance on the table for the fourth time. I produced a bottle of rum. I had made no mistake in taking my interlocutor for a noble of small estate. His name was Piótr Petróvitch Karatáeff.

We entered into conversation. Half an hour had not elapsed since his arrival before he, with the most good-humoured frankness, had related to me the story of his life.

"Now I 'm going to Moscow,"—he said to me, as he drained his fourth cup:—"there 's nothing more for me to do in the country now."

"Why not?"

"Just because there is n't . . . not a thing. My farming operations are thoroughly disorganised, I have ruined the peasants, I must confess; we have had bad years; poor harvests, various calamities, you know. . . . And besides,"—he added, with a dejected glance aside:—"I 'm no sort of a landlord!"

"How so?"

"Because I 'm not,"—he interrupted me. "There are good landlords of a very different sort from me. See here, now,"—he went on, twisting his head on one side, and sucking diligently at his pipe:—"Perhaps you are thinking, as you look at me, that I—you know . . . . but I must admit to you, that I received a mediocre education; means were lacking. You must

excuse me, I 'm an outspoken man, and in short . . . ."

He did not finish his remark and waved his hand. I began to assure him, that he was in error, that I was very glad that we had met, and so forth, after which I remarked that, for the management of an estate, too intense culture was not necessary, apparently.

" Agreed,"—he replied:—" I agree with you. But nevertheless, a certain special inclination is requisite! One man will do God knows what, and it 's all right! but I . . . . Permit me to inquire, are you from Peter [1] or from Moscow? "

" I am from Petersburg."

He emitted a long wreath of smoke through his nostrils.

" And I 'm going to Moscow to enter the government service."

" Where do you intend to establish yourself? "

" That I don't know: as fortune favours. I must confess to you, that I 'm afraid of the service: the first you know, you incur some responsibility. I have always lived in the country; I 'm used to that, you know . . . . but there 's no help for it . . . . necessity compels! Okh, hang that necessity! "

" On the other hand, you will reside in the capital."

" Yes, in the capital . . . . well, I don't know

[1] Abbreviation of St. Petersburg.—Translator.

what there is good there, in the capital. We shall see, perhaps it is good. . . . But I think that nothing can be better than the country."

"But is it impossible for you to live in the country any longer?"

He heaved a sigh.

"It is. The village is hardly mine any more."

"How is that?"

"Why, a kind man there—a neighbour has instituted . . . . a lawsuit . . . . . there was a note of hand. . . . ." Poor Piótr Petróvitch passed his hand over his face, meditated, and shook his head.

"Well, never mind! . . . . But I must admit,"—he added, after a brief pause:—"I have no complaint to make of any one, I myself am to blame. I was fond of having my own way,—devil take it, I was fond of showing my independence!"

"Did you live in jolly style in the country?"—I asked him.

"Sir,"—he answered me, pausing between his words, and looking me straight in the eye,—"I had twelve leashes of greyhounds,—such greyhounds, I must tell you, are rare." (He pronounced this last word with a drawl.)—"They would shake the life out of a hare on the instant, and as for deer,—they were serpents, regular asps. But that 's a thing of the past now, there 's no use in lying about it. I used to hunt with a

gun. I had a dog, Kontéska; a remarkable pointer, she took everything by her extremely fine scent. I used to approach the marsh, and say: 'Charge!' and she would n't hunt; even if you were to pass by with a dozen dogs,—you would waste your time, nothing would you find! but when she did begin,—you 'd simply be glad to die on the spot! . . . . And she was so polite in the house. Give her bread with your left hand and say:—'A Jew bit it,'—and she would n't take it, but give it to her with your right hand, and say: 'A young lady tasted it,'—and instantly she 'd take it and eat it. I had a pup of hers, a capital pup, and I wanted to take it to Moscow, but a friend begged it of me, along with my gun; says he: 'In Moscow, brother, you will have no use for them; everything will be quite different there, brother.' So I gave him the pup, and the gun too; everything remained there—behind, you know."

"But you might have hunted in Moscow also."

"No; what 's the use? I have n't known how to hold my ground, so now let me endure with patience. But here now, permit me rather to inquire, how is living in Moscow—dear?"

"No, not very."

"Not very? . . . . But tell me, please, the gipsies live in Moscow, don't they?"

"What gipsies?"

"Why, the ones who travel round to the fairs?"

"Yes, they live in Moscow. . . ."

"Well, that 's good. I 'm fond of gipsies,—damn it, I love them. . . . . ."

And Piótr Petróvitch's eyes sparkled with audacious jollity. But, all at once, he began to wriggle about on the bench, then grew thoughtful, drooped his head, and stretched out his empty glass to me.

"Give me some of your rum, pray,"—said he.

"But the tea is all gone."

"Never mind, I 'll take it so, without tea. . . . . Ekh!"

Karatáeff laid his head on his hands, and propped his arms on the table. I gazed at him in silence, and waited for those emotional exclamations, probably, even, those tears, of which a man in a carouse is so lavish; but when he raised his head, the profoundly-melancholy expression of his face amazed me, I must confess.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir. . . . I have been recalling old times. There 's an anecdote, sir. . . . I 'd tell it to you, only I 'm ashamed to disturb you. . . ."

"Pray, do not mention it!"

"Yes,"—he went on, with a sigh:—"things happen . . . however, for instance, to me also. Here now, if you like, I 'll tell you the story. However, I don't know. . . ."

" Tell me, my dear Piótr Petróvitch." . . .

" Very well, although it 's rather . . . . Well, you see,"—he began:—" but really, I don't know . . . . . "

" Come, enough of that, my dear Piótr Petróvitch."

" Well, as you like. So then, this is what happened to me, so to say. I was living in the village, sir. . . . . All at once, I took a fancy to a young girl. Akh, what a girl she was! . . . . beautiful, clever, and so good-natured! Her name was Matryóna, sir. And she was a simple lass,—that is to say, you understand, a serf, simply a slave, sir. And she was n't my girl, but the property of another,—and therein lay the misfortune. Well, and so I fell in love with her,—really, sir, the anecdote is of a sort,—well, here goes. So Matryóna began to entreat me to buy her from her mistress; and I was thinking of that same thing myself. . . . But her mistress was wealthy, a dreadful old woman; she lived about fifteen versts from me. Well, one fine day, as the saying is, I ordered my tróïka to be harnessed, —I had a pacer for a shaft-horse, a wonderful Asiatic beast, and his name was Lampurdos, by the way,—dressed myself in my best, and drove off to Matryóna's mistress. I arrived: 't was a big house, with wings, in a park. . . . . Matryóna was waiting for me at the turn of the road, and tried to speak to me, but merely kissed my

hand and stepped aside. So then, I entered the anteroom, and inquired: 'Is the lady at home?' . . . . And a footman as tall as that, says: 'What name shall I announce?' Says I: 'My good fellow, announce that Squire Karatáeff has come to talk over a matter of business.' The lackey withdrew; I waited, and thought to myself: 'How will it turn out? I suppose the beast will demand a frightful price, in spite of the fact that she 's rich.' Well, at last, the footman returned, and said: 'Please come with me.' I followed him to the drawing-room. In an arm-chair sat a tiny sallow old woman, blinking her eyes. . . . 'What do you want?'—I thought it necessary first, you know, to declare that I came to make her acquaintance.—'You are mistaken, I am not the mistress of the house, I am a relation of hers. . . . What do you want?'—Thereupon I remarked to her, that I must speak with the mistress herself.—'Márya Ilínitchna is not receiving to-day; she is not well. . . . . What do you want?' . . . . 'There 's no help for it,' said I to myself, 'I 'll explain the circumstances to her.' The old woman heard me to the end.—'Matryóna? what Matryóna?—Matryóna Feódoroff, the daughter of Kulikóff—Feódor Kulikóff's daughter? . . . . but how do you know her?' 'Accidentally.'—'And is she acquainted with your intention?'—'She is.'—The old woman was silent for a while.—'I 'll give it to her, the

wretch! . . .'—I was amazed, I must admit.—'What for, good gracious! . . . . I am ready to pay a good sum for her, only please to designate it.'—The old hag fairly frothed at the mouth.—'Well, a pretty way you 've devised to astonish people: much we care for your money! . . . . but won't I give it to her, though! I 'll deal with her. . . . I 'll thrash the folly out of her.'—The old woman fell into a fit of coughing with rage. 'Is n't she well off with us, I 'd like to know? Akh, she 's a devil, Lord forgive my sin!'—I flared up, I must confess.—'Why do you make threats against the poor girl? In what way is she to blame?'—The old woman crossed herself.—'Akh, O Lord, do you mean to say that I . . .'—'But she does n't belong to you, you know!'—'Well, Márya Ilínitchna knows all about that; 't is no business of yours, my good man; but just wait, I 'll show that wretched Matryóna whose slave she is.'—I must confess, that I came near flinging myself on the cursed old woman, but I remembered Matryóna, and dropped my hands. It is impossible to tell you how timid I became; I began to entreat the old woman. 'Take what you will,' I said.—'But what do you want of her?'—'I 've taken a fancy to her, mátushka; put yourself in my place. . . . Permit me to kiss your little hand.'—And I actually kissed the villain's hand!—'Well!' mumbled the old witch:—'I 'll tell Márya Ilínitchna; it will be as she com-

mands; and do you drop in again a couple of days hence.'—I drove home in great perturbation. I had begun to divine that I had managed the business badly, that I had made a mistake in allowing my affection to be seen, but I had thought of it too late. A couple of days later I set off to call on the lady. I was shown into her study. There was a profusion of flowers, the decorations were fine; the lady herself was seated in such a curious easy-chair, with her head reclining on cushions; and the relative whom I had seen before was sitting there also; and, besides these, some young lady or other with white eyebrows and lashes, in a green gown, a wry-mouthed creature, a companion, probably. The old woman snuffled out: 'Please sit down.' I sat down. She began to question me, as to how old I was, and where I had served, and what I intended to do; and all this in a patronising, pompous way. I replied in detail. The old woman took a handkerchief from the table, and fanned and fanned herself with it. . . . 'Katerína Kárpovna has made a report to me concerning your intentions,' said she; 'she has reported to me,' said she; 'but I have made it a rule,' said she, 'not to release my people to go out to service. It is not seemly, and it is not proper in a respectable house: it is n't good form. I have already taken the proper measures,' said she, 'and there is no necessity for troubling you further.'—'It is no trouble, I assure you. . . . But

perhaps you need Matryóna Feódorovna?'—'No,' said she, 'I don't need her.'—'Then why will not you let me have her?'—'Because I don't choose, because I don't choose to do it, and that 's all there is to be said. I have already made arrangements,' said she: 'she is to be sent to a village on the steppes.'—This was like a clap of thunder to me. The old woman said a couple of words in French to the green young lady: the latter left the room.—'I 'm a woman of strict principles,' said she, 'and my health is not strong. I cannot endure being worried. You are still a young man, and I am already an old woman, and entitled to give you advice. Would not it be better for you to settle down, to marry, to hunt up a good match? Wealthy brides are rare, but a poor girl, and one of good moral character, can be found.'—Do you know, I stared at the old woman, and did n't understand a word of what she was jabbering; I heard her saying something about marriage, but the village on the steppes kept ringing in my ears. 'Marry! Marry!' . . . . what the devil! . . . ."

At this point the narrator suddenly halted, and cast a glance at me.

"You 're not married, are you?"

"No."

"Well, certainly not, as a matter of course. I could n't bear it:—'Why, good gracious, mátushka, what nonsense are you babbling? What

has marriage to do with it? I simply want to know, whether you will sell your maid Matryóna or not?'—The old woman began to groan.—'Akh, he has worried me! Akh, order him to go away! akh! . . . .' The relative sprang to her assistance, and began to scream at me. And the old woman kept on moaning:—'How have I deserved this? . . . Am I no longer mistress in my own house? Akh, akh!' I seized my hat, and rushed out of the house like a madman.

"Perhaps," pursued the narrator, "you will condemn me for having become so attached to a girl of the lower classes: and I have no intention of defending myself. It was no fault of mine! If you will believe it, I had no peace day or night. . . . I tortured myself! 'Why have I ruined the unhappy girl?' I thought. As soon as I called to mind that she was herding the geese in a coarse, collarless smock, and ill-treated by her mistress's command, and the overseer, a peasant in tarred boots, was swearing at her and calling her names, the cold sweat would begin fairly to drip off me. Well, I could n't endure it: I found out to what village she had been sent, mounted my horse, and rode thither. I did not arrive until toward evening of the second day. Evidently, they had not expected such a caper on my part, and no orders had been given concerning me. I went straight to the overseer, like a neighbour; I entered the farmyard, and behold, there sat Matryóna on the steps,

with her head propped on her hand. She was on the point of crying out, but I shook my finger at her, and pointed to the back-yard, to the fields. I entered the cottage, chatted with the overseer, told him a devilish lot of lies, took advantage of a good opportunity, and went out to meet Matryóna. She, poor girl, fairly hung upon my neck. She had grown pale, and thin, my dear little dove. And, do you know, I said to her: 'Never mind, Matryóna, never mind, don't cry;' —but my own tears were flowing all the while. . . . Well, anyway, at last I felt ashamed; I said to her:—'Matryóna, tears will not help: we must act with decision, as the saying is; thou must flee with me; that 's the way we must act.'—Matryóna almost swooned. . . . 'How can I do that? why, I shall be ruined, and they will persecute me worse than ever!'—'Thou silly, who will find thee?'—'They will find me, they will find me without fail. I thank you, Piótr Petróvitch,—so long as I live I shall never forget thy kindness, but do thou leave me now; evidently, such is my fate.'—'Ekh, Matryóna, Matryóna, I had thought that thou wert a girl of firm character.' —And, in fact, she had a lot of firmness . . . . she had a soul, a soul of gold!—'Why shouldst thou stay here? it will make no difference; thou wilt be none the worse off. Come now, tell me: hast thou tasted the overseer's fists, hey?'—Matryóna fairly boiled with wrath, and her lips be-

gan to quiver.—'But my family will be persecuted on my account.'—'Damn thy family. . . Will they exile it, pray?'—'Yes, they will certainly send my brother into exile.'—'And thy father?'—'Well, they will not exile my father; he is a very good tailor.'—'There now, seest thou; and thy brother will not be ruined by that.' —If you will believe me, I prevailed upon her by force; she tried to argue a while longer, saying: 'They will hold thee to account for it. . . .' 'But that 's no business of thine,' said I. . . . So I just carried her off . . . . not on that occasion, but on another: I came by night, in a cart—and carried her off."

"You carried her off?"

"I did. . . . Well, and so she settled down with me. My house was not large, my servants were few. My people, I will say it without circumlocution, respected me; they would n't have betrayed me for any sort of good fortune. I began to live like a fighting-cock. My dear little Matryóna got rested, and recovered her health; and I got so attached to her. . . And what a girl she was! she could sing, and dance, and play the guitar. . . . I did n't show her to the neighbours: they 'd have proclaimed the affair abroad the very first thing! But I had a friend, a bosom-friend, Panteléi Gornostáeff — perhaps you are acquainted with him? He simply adored her: he used to kiss her hand as though she had been a

well-born lady, he really did. And I must tell you, that Gornostáeff was no mate for me: he was an educated man, he had read Púshkin all through; when he began to talk to Matryóna and me, we would fairly prick up our ears. He taught her to write, such an eccentric fellow he was! And how I used to dress her,—better than the Governor's wife, and that 's all there is to it; I had a fur-lined cloak of crimson velvet, with a fur border, made for her. . . . . And how becoming that cloak was to her! A Moscow mantua-maker madame made that fur cloak after a new pattern, fitted in at the waist.[1] And how wondrously beautiful Matryóna was! She used to sit for hours at a time, staring at the floor, and never moving an eyelash: and I would sit there also, and gaze at her, and never could gaze my fill, just as though I had never beheld her before. . . . . She would smile, and my heart would fairly quiver, as though some one had tickled it. And then all of a sudden, she would set to laughing, and jesting, and dancing; she would embrace me so warmly, so strongly, that my head would grow dizzy. From morning till night, the only thing I used to think about, was: 'How can I give her pleasure?' And if you will believe me, I used to give her presents simply for the sake of

[1] The ordinary Russian "shúba" is of the old-fashioned "circular" shape, reaching from the neck to the ground, fur-lined, and with a long "shawl"-shaped fur collar, which can be drawn up around the ears.—TRANSLATOR.

seeing how she, my darling, would rejoice, and blush all over with joy, and begin to try on my gift, and come to display herself to me in her new things, and kiss me. I don't know how her father, Kulík, ferreted out the business; the old man came to take a look at us, and began to cry. . . . Thus we lived for five months, and I had no objections to spending my whole life with her, but my fate is such an accursed one!"

Piótr Petróvitch paused.

"What happened?"—I asked him with interest.

He waved his hand.

"Everything went to the devil. And it was I that ruined her. Matryóna was excessively fond of sleigh-riding, and used to drive herself; she would don her fur cloak, and embroidered Torzhók[1] mittens, and do nothing but shout. We always drove in the evening, so that we might not meet any one, you know. So, once we picked out a magnificent day; very cold and clear, with no wind . . . and set off. Matryóna took the reins. So I looked to see where she was going. Could it be to Kukuévko, the village of her mistress? Exactly so, it was to Kukuévko. I said to her: 'Thou crazy girl, whither art thou going?' She glanced over her shoulder

[1] The leather wares made in Torzhók, not far from Moscow, are an imitation of the beautiful, many-hued and embroidered goods made at Kazán by the Tatárs. In comparison with the latter, they are coarse, and the embroidery in silks, gold, and silver is very perishable.—TRANSLATOR.

at me, and laughed. As much as to say: 'Let me show my daring!' 'Ah!' I thought: 'well, here goes!' . . . . 'T was a nice thing to drive past the manor-house, was n't it? tell me yourself—was n't it nice? Well, we drove on. My pacer fairly floated along, and the trace-horses went like the wind, I can tell you,—and soon the church at Kukuévko came in sight; and behold an old green coach on runners is crawling along the road, and a footman is towering up on the footboard behind. . . . 'T was the lady, the lady driving! I was frightened, but how Matryóna slapped the reins on the horses' backs, and how we did dash straight at the coach! The coachman! He, you understand, saw that some wild phantom or other was flying to meet him,—and tried to turn out, you know, but turned too short, and overturned the coach into a snow-drift. The window was smashed, the lady shrieked: 'Aï, áï, áï! áï, áï, áï!' the companion squealed: 'Stop, stop!' but we drove past as fast as we could go. As I galloped on I thought: 'Harm will come of this; I ought n't to have allowed her to drive to Kukuévko.' And what do you think? the lady had recognised Matryóna, and had recognised me, the old thing, and she made a complaint against me: 'My fugitive serf-girl is living with nobleman Karatáeff;' and thereupon she showed the proper gratitude.[1] And behold, the rural chief of

[1] That is, bribed in the proper quarter.—TRANSLATOR.

police comes to me; and this chief of police was a man I knew, Stepán Sergyéitch Kuzóvkin, a nice man; that is to say, in reality not a nice man. So he comes and says: thus and so, Piótr Petróvitch,—how came you to do this? . . . . 'T is a heavy responsibility, and the laws are clear on this point.—I said to him: 'Well, of course, you and I will talk this over, but won't you have a bite after your journey?' He consented to have a bite, but said: 'Justice demands, Piótr Petróvitch, judge for yourself.'—'It 's all right about justice, of course,'—said I: 'that 's understood . . . but see here, I have heard, that you have a black horse, so would n't you like to swap it for my Lampurdos? . . . . And I have n't got the girl Matryóna Feódorova in my house.'—'Well, Piótr Petróvitch,' says he; 'the girl is in your house, we are n't living in Switzerland, you know . . . . but I might swap my horse for your Lampurdos; I might take him now, if you like.' So I managed to get rid of him that time, somehow. But the old lady made a bigger fuss than before; 'I won't hesitate to spend ten thousand rubles,' said she. You see, as she looked at me, she had suddenly taken it into her head, to marry me to her green companion,—I found that out afterward; and that is why she made such a row. What whims those well-born ladies do take into their heads! . . . Out of boredom, I suppose. I was in a bad fix: I did not spare my

money, and I concealed Matryóna,—in vain! They harassed me to death, they got me completely tied up in a snarl. I got into debt, I lost my health. . . . So, one night I lay in my bed and thought: 'O Lord my God, why do I endure it? What am I to do, if I can't renounce my love for her? . . . Well, I can't, and that 's all there is about it!'—and Matryóna walks into my room. All this time I had been hiding her at my farm, a couple of versts from my house. I was frightened.—'What 's the matter? have they discovered thee there?'—'No, Piótr Petróvitch,'—says she: 'no one is troubling me at Búbnova; but can this continue long? My heart,' says she, 'is breaking, Piótr Petróvitch; I 'm so sorry for you, my darling: as long as I live I shall never forget your kindness, Piótr Petróvitch, but I have come now to bid you farewell.'—'What art thou saying, what art thou saying, thou madwoman? . . . What dost thou mean, what dost thou mean, by bidding me farewell?'—'Why, so . . I 'll go and surrender myself.'—'But I 'll lock thee up in the garret, thou mad creature. . . . Hast thou taken it into thy head to ruin me? dost thou wish to kill me, pray?' —The girl said nothing, but stared at the floor.—'Come, speak, speak!'—'I don't want to cause you any more trouble, Piótr Petróvitch.'—Well, it was no use talking to her. . . 'But knowest thou, fool, knowest thou, thou cra . . . . crazy woman. . . . .'"

And Piótr Petróvitch burst out sobbing bitterly.

"And, what do you think?"—he went on, smiting the table with his fist, and trying to frown, while the tears continued to stream down his flushed cheeks:—"the girl actually gave herself up,—she went and gave herself up. . . ."

"The horses are ready, sir!"—cried the superintendent solemnly, entering the room.

We both rose.

"And what did they do with Matryóna?"—I asked.

Karatáeff waved his hand.

A year after my meeting with Karatáeff, I happened to go to Moscow. One day, before dinner, I entered a café which is situated behind the Okhótny Ryády,[1]—an original, Moscow café. In the billiard-room athwart the billows of smoke, one caught fleeting glances of reddened faces, moustaches, crest-curls, old-fashioned hussar-jackets, and the newest-patterned coats. Gaunt old men in plain coats were reading the Russian newspapers. Waiters were flitting briskly about with trays, treading softly on the green carpets. Merchants were drinking tea with painful assiduity. All at once there emerged from the billiard-room a man who was somewhat dishevelled, and not quite steady on his legs. He thrust his hands into his pockets,

[1] Or, "game-market."—TRANSLATOR.

hung his head, and stared stupidly around him.

"Ba, ba, ba! Piótr Petróvitch! . . . . How are you?"

Piótr Petróvitch fairly hurled himself on my neck, and drew me aside with somewhat staggering steps, into a private room.

"Here now,"—he said, solicitously seating me in an easy-chair:—"Here you will be comfortable. Waiter, beer! No, I mean champagne! Well, I admit, that I was n't expecting, I was n't expecting. . . . Have you been in town long? are you here for long? Here, God has brought, as the saying is, the man . . ."

"But, do you remember . . . . "

"How could I fail to remember? how could I fail to remember?"—he hastily interrupted me:—"'t is an affair of the past . . . . an affair of the past. . . ."

"Well, what are you doing here, my dear Piótr Petróvitch?"

"I am living, as you are pleased to observe. Life is good here, the people are cordial. I have recovered my composure here."

And he sighed, and raised his eyes to heaven.

"Are you in the service?"

"No sir, I 'm not serving yet, but I 'm thinking of finding a position soon. And what 's the service? . . . . . People—that 's the principal

thing. What fine people I have made acquaintance with here!" . . . .

A boy entered with a bottle of champagne on a black tray.

"Here, he 's a fine man too . . . thou art a fine man, art thou not, Vásya? To thy health!"

The lad stood still for a moment, shaking his little head decorously, then smiled, and left the room.

"Yes, the people here are nice,"—went on Piótr Petróvitch:—"they have sentiment, they have soul. . . . I 'll introduce you, shall I? Such splendid fellows. . . . They will all be delighted to know you. I must tell you. . . . Bobróff is dead, and that 's a pity."

"What Bobróff?"

"Sergyéi Bobróff. He was a splendid man; he took care of me, an ignoramus, a steppe-dweller. And Panteléi Gornostáeff is dead too. All are dead, all!"

"Have you been living all the time in Moscow? Have you not made a trip to your village?"

"To the village . . . . they have sold my village."

"Sold it?"

"At *suction*.[1] It 's a pity that you did not buy it!"

"What are you going to live on, Piótr Petróvitch?"

[1] Auction.—Translator.

"Why, I shall not die of hunger. God will provide! If I have no money, I shall have friends. And what is money?—dust! Gold dust!"

He screwed up his eyes, fumbled in his pocket with his hand, and held out to me on his palm two fifteen-kopék pieces, and a ten-kopék piece.

"What's that? Dust, is n't it?" (And the money flew to the floor.) "But do you tell me, rather, have you read Polezháeff?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen Motcháloff in Hamlet?"

"No, I have not seen him."

"You haven't seen him, you have n't seen him. . ." (And Karatáeff's face turned pale, his eyes roved uneasily; faint convulsive twitches flitted across his lips.)

"Akh, Motcháloff, Motcháloff! 'To die, to sleep'"—he quoted, in a dull voice:

"No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. . . . . 'T is a consummation
Devoutly to be wished! To die,—to sleep. . . .

"'To sleep, to sleep!'"—he muttered, several times in succession.

"Tell me, please,"—I began; but he went on fervidly:

"For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? . . . . Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered!"

And he dropped his head on the table. He was beginning to hiccough and to talk at random.

"'And in one month,'" he enunciated, with fresh force:

"A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears,—why, she, even she,—
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourned longer. . . ."

He raised his glass of champagne to his lips, but did not drink the wine, and continued:

"For Hecuba!
What 's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? . . . .
Yet I . . . . a dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams! Who calls me villain?
Gives me the lie i' the throat?
'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter. . . ."

Karatáeff dropped his glass and clutched his head. It seemed to me that I understood him.

"Well, never mind,"—he said at last:—"when

sorrow is asleep, wake it not. . . . Is n't that true?" (And he began to laugh.)—"To your health!"

"Shall you remain in Moscow?"—I asked him.

"I shall die in Moscow!"

"Karatáeff,"—shouted some one in the adjoining room—"Karatáeff, where art thou? come hither, my dear fe-ow!" [1]

"They are calling me,"—he said, rising heavily from his seat.—"Good-bye; drop in to see me if you can, I live in * * *."

But on the following day, owing to unforeseen circumstances, I was obliged to leave Moscow, and never saw Piótr Petróvitch Karatáeff again.

[1] It is rather fashionable to pronounce *tchelovyék tche-a-ék*. Thereby, also, the "hard *l*" is avoided, which is as difficult to pronounce, for some Russians (not to mention foreigners), as the *r* is for many Englishmen and Americans.—TRANSLATOR.

VI

THE TRYST

I was sitting in a birch grove in autumn, about the middle of September. A fine drizzling rain had been descending ever since dawn, interspersed at times with warm sunshine; the weather was inconstant. Now the sky would be completely veiled in porous white clouds; again, all of a sudden, it would clear up in spots for a moment, and then, from behind the parted thunderclouds, the clear and friendly azure would show itself, like a beautiful eye. I sat, and gazed about me, and listened. The leaves were rustling in a barely audible manner overhead; from their sound alone one could tell what season of the year it was. It was not the cheerful, laughing rustle of springtime, not the soft whispering, not the long conversation of summer, not the cold and timid stammering of late autumn, but a barely audible, dreamy chatter. A faint breeze swept feebly across the tree-tops. The interior of the grove, moist with the rain, kept changing incessantly, according to whether the sun shone forth, or was covered with a cloud; now it was all illuminated, as though everything in it were suddenly smiling:

the slender boles of the not too thickly set birches suddenly assumed the tender gleam of white silk, the small leaves which lay on the ground suddenly grew variegated and lighted up with the golden hue of ducats, and the handsome stalks of the tall, curly ferns, already stained with their autumnal hue, like the colour of over-ripe grapes, seemed fairly transparent, as they intertwined interminably and crossed one another before one's eyes; now, of a sudden, everything round about would turn slightly blue: the brilliant hues were extinguished for a moment, the birches stood there all white, devoid of reflections, white as newly fallen snow, which has not yet been touched by the sparkling rays of the winter sun; and the fine rain began stealthily, craftily, to sprinkle and whisper through the forest. The foliage on the trees was still almost entirely green, although it had faded perceptibly; only here and there stood one, some young tree, all scarlet, or all gold, and you should have seen how brilliantly it flamed up in the sun, when the rays gliding and changing, suddenly pierced through the thick network of the slender branches, only just washed clean by the glittering rain. Not a single bird was to be heard; they had all taken refuge, and fallen silent; only now and then did the jeering little voice of the tom-tit ring out like a tiny steel bell. Before I had come to a halt in this birch-forest I and my dog had trav-

ersed a grove of lofty aspens. I must confess that I am not particularly fond of that tree, the aspen, with its pale-lilac trunk, and greyish-green, metallic foliage, which it elevates as high aloft as possible, and spreads forth to the air in a trembling fan; I do not like the eternal rocking of its round, dirty leaves, awkwardly fastened to their long stems. It is a fine tree only on some summer evenings when, rising isolated amid a plot of low-growing bushes, it stands directly in the line of the glowing rays of the setting sun, and glistens and quivers from its root to its crest, all deluged with a uniform reddish-yellow stain,—or when, on a bright, windy day, it is all noisily rippling and lisping against the blue sky, and its every leaf, caught in the current, seems to want to wrench itself free, fly off and whirl away into the distance. But, on the whole, I do not like that tree, and therefore, without halting to rest in that grove, I wended my way to the little birch-coppice, nestled down under one small tree, whose boughs began close to the ground, and, consequently, could protect me from the rain, and after having admired the surrounding view, I sank into that untroubled and benignant slumber which is known to sportsmen alone.

I cannot tell how long I slept, but when I opened my eyes,—the whole interior of the forest was filled with sunlight, and in all directions, athwart the joyously rustling foliage, the bright-

blue sky seemed to be sparkling: the clouds had vanished, dispersed by the sportive breeze; the weather had cleared, and in the atmosphere was perceptible that peculiar, dry chill which, filling the heart with a sort of sensation of alertness, almost always is the harbinger of a clear evening after a stormy day. I was preparing to rise to my feet, and try my luck again, when suddenly my eyes halted on a motionless human form. I took a more attentive look: it was a young peasant maiden. She was sitting twenty paces distant from me, with her head drooping thoughtfully, and both arms lying idly on her knees; on one of them, which was half bare, lay a thick bunch of field flowers, which went slipping softly down her plaid petticoat at each breath she drew. Her clean white chemise, unbuttoned at the throat and wrists, fell in short, soft folds about her figure: two rows of large yellow pearl-beads depended from her neck upon her breast. She was very comely. Her thick, fair hair, of a fine ash-blond hue, fell in two carefully brushed semi-circles from beneath a narrow, red band which was pulled down almost on her very brow, as white as ivory; the rest of her face was slightly sunburned to that golden tint which only a fine skin assumes. I could not see her eyes—she did not raise them; but I did see her high, slender eyebrows, her long eyelashes; they were moist, and on one of her cheeks there glittered in the sunlight the dried

trace of a tear, that had stopped short close to her lips, which had grown slightly pale. Her whole little head was extremely charming; even her rather thick and rounded nose did not spoil it. I was particularly pleased with the expression of her face: it was so simple and gentle, so sad and so full of childish surprise at its own sadness. She was evidently waiting for some one; something crackled faintly in the forest. She immediately raised her head and looked about her; in the transparent shadow her eyes flashed swiftly before me,—large, clear, timorous eyes, like those of a doe. She listened for several moments, without taking her widely opened eyes from the spot where the faint noise had resounded, sighed, gently turned away her head, bent down still lower than before, and began slowly to sort over her flowers. Her eyelids reddened, her lips moved bitterly, and a fresh tear rolled from beneath her thick eyelashes, halting and glittering radiantly on her cheek. Quite a long time passed in this manner; the poor girl did not stir,—only now and then she moved her hands about and listened, listened still. . . . Again something made a noise in the forest,—she gave a start. The noise did not cease, grew more distinct, drew nearer; at last brisk, decided footsteps made themselves audible. She drew herself up, and seemed to be frightened; her attentive glance wavered, with expectation, apparently. A man's figure flitted

swiftly through the thicket. She glanced at it, suddenly flushed up, smiled joyously and happily, tried to rise to her feet, and immediately bent clear over once more, grew pale and confused,—and only raised her palpitating, almost beseeching glance to the approaching man when the latter had come to a halt by her side.

I gazed at him with interest from my ambush. I must confess that he did not produce a pleasant impression on me. From all the signs, he was the petted valet of a young, wealthy gentleman. His clothing betrayed pretensions to taste and foppish carelessness: he wore a short overcoat of bronze hue, probably the former property of his master, buttoned to the throat, a small pink neckerchief with lilac ends, and a black velvet cap, with gold galloon, pulled down to his very eyebrows. The round collar of his white shirt propped up his ears, and ruthlessly sawed his cheeks, and his starched cuffs covered the whole of his hands down to his red, crooked fingers, adorned with gold and silver rings with turquoise forget-me-nots. His fresh, rosy, bold face belonged to the category of visages which, so far as I have been able to observe, almost always irritate men and, unfortunately, very often please women. He was, obviously, trying to impart to his somewhat coarse features a scornful and bored expression; he kept incessantly screwing up his little milky-grey eyes, which were small enough

without that, knitting his brows, drawing down the corners of his lips, constrainedly yawning, and with careless, although not quite skilful ease of manner he now adjusted with his hand his sandy, dashingly upturned temple-curls, now plucked at the small yellow hairs which stuck out on his thick upper lip,—in a word, he put on intolerable airs. He began to put on airs as soon as he caught sight of the young peasant girl who was waiting for him; slowly, with a swaggering stride, he approached her, stood for a moment, shrugged his shoulders, thrust both hands into the pockets of his coat, and, barely vouchsafing the poor girl a fugitive and indifferent glance, he dropped down on the ground.

"Well,"—he began, continuing to gaze off somewhere to one side, dangling his foot and yawning:—"hast thou been here long?"

The girl could not answer him at once.

"A long time, sir, Viktór Alexándrovitch,"—she said at last, in a barely audible voice.

"Ah!" (He removed his cap, passed his hand majestically over his thick, tightly curled hair, which began almost at his very eyebrows, and after glancing around him with dignity, he carefully covered his precious head again.) "Why, I came pretty near forgetting all about it. And then, there was the rain, you know!" (He yawned again.)—"I have a lot of things to do: I can't attend to them all, and he scolds

into the bargain. To-morrow we are going away. . . ."

"To-morrow?"—ejaculated the girl, and fixed a frightened glance on him.

"Yes, to-morrow. . . . Come, come, come, pray,"—he interposed hastily and with vexation, seeing that she was beginning to tremble, and had softly drooped her head:—"Pray, don't cry, Akulína. Thou knowest that I cannot endure that." (And he wrinkled up his stubby nose.)—"If thou dost, I 'll go away instantly. . . . . How stupid it is to whimper!"

"Well, I won't, I won't,"—hastily articulated Akulína, swallowing her tears with an effort.—"So you are going away to-morrow?"—she added after a short silence:—"When will God grant me to see you again, Viktór Alexándrovitch?"

"We shall see each other again, we shall see each other again. If not next year, then later on. I think the master intends to enter the government service in Petersburg,"—he went on, uttering his words carelessly and somewhat through his nose:—"and perhaps we shall go abroad."

"You will forget me, Viktór Alexándrovitch,"—said Akulína sadly.

"No, why should I? I will not forget thee: only, thou must be sensible, don't make a fool of thyself, heed thy father. . . . And I won't for-

get thee—no-o-o." (And he calmly stretched himself and yawned again.)

"Do not forget me, Viktór Alexándrovitch," she continued, in a tone of entreaty. "I think that I have loved you to such a degree, it always seems as though for you, I would . . . . you say, I must obey my father, Viktór Alexándrovitch. . . . But how am I to obey my father. . . . ."

"But why not?" (He uttered these words as though from his stomach, as he lay on his back, with his arms under his head.)

"But what do you mean, Viktór Alexándrovitch . . . you know yourself. . . ."

She stopped short, Viktór toyed with the steel chain of his watch.

"Thou art not a stupid girl, Akulína,"—he began at last:—"therefore, don't talk nonsense. I desire thy welfare, dost understand me? Of course, thou art not stupid, not a regular peasant, so to speak; and thy mother also was not always a peasant. All the same, thou hast no education —so thou must obey when people give thee orders."

"But I 'm afraid, Viktór Alexándrovitch."

"I-i, what nonsense, my dear creature! What hast thou to be afraid of? What 's that thou hast there,"—he added, moving toward her:—"flowers?"

"Yes,"—replied Akulína, dejectedly.—"I have been plucking some wild tansy,"—she went

on, after a brief pause:—" 'T is good for the calves. And this here is a good remedy for scrofula. See, what a wonderfully beautiful flower! I have never seen such a beautiful flower in my life. Here are forget-me-nots, and here is a violet. . . . And this, here, I got for you,"—she added, drawing from beneath the yellow tansy a small bunch of blue corn-flowers, bound together with a slender blade of grass:—" Will you take them? "

Viktór languidly put out his hand, took the flowers, smelled of them carelessly, and began to twist them about in his fingers, staring pompously upward. Akulína glanced at him. . . . In her sorrowful gaze there was a great deal of devotion, of adoring submission to him. And she was afraid of him also, and did not dare to cry, and was bidding him farewell and gloating upon him for the last time; but he lay there, sprawling out like a sultan, and tolerated her adoration with magnanimous patience and condescension. I must confess, that I gazed with indignation at his red face, whereon, athwart the feignedly-scornful indifference, there peered forth satisfied, satiated self-conceit. Akulína was so fine at that moment: her whole soul opened confidingly, passionately before him, reached out to him, fawned upon him, and he . . . . he dropped the corn-flowers on the grass, pulled a round monocle in a bronze setting from the side-pocket of his pale-

tot, and began to stick it into his eye; but try as he would to hold it fast with his frowning brows, the monocle kept tumbling out and falling into his hand.

"What is that?"—inquired the amazed Akulína at last.

"A lorgnette,"—he replied pompously.

"What is it for?"

"To see better with."

"Pray let me see it."

Viktór frowned, but gave her the monocle.

"Look out, see that thou dost not break it."

"Never fear, I won't break it." (She raised it timidly to her eye.) "I can see nothing,"—she said innocently.

"Why, pucker up thine eye,"—he retorted in the tone of a displeased preceptor. (She screwed up the eye in front of which she was holding the glass.)

"Not that one, not that one, the other one!"—shouted Viktór, and without giving her a chance to repair her mistake, he snatched the lorgnette away from her.

Akulína blushed scarlet, smiled faintly, and turned away.

"Evidently, it is not suited to the like of me,"—said she.

"I should say not!"

The poor girl made no reply, and sighed deeply.

"Akh, Viktór Alexándrovitch, what shall I do without you!"—she suddenly said. Viktór wiped the lorgnette with the tail of his coat, and put it back in his pocket.

"Yes, yes,"—he said at last:—"thou wilt really find it very hard at first." (He patted her condescendingly on the shoulder; she softly removed his hand from her shoulder, and kissed it timidly.)—"Well, yes, yes, thou really art a good girl,"—he went on, with a conceited smile; "but what can one do? Judge for thyself! the master and I cannot remain here; winter will soon be here, and the country in winter—thou knowest it thyself—is simply vile. 'T is quite another matter in Petersburg! There are simply such marvels there as thou, silly, canst not even imagine in thy dreams. Such houses, such streets, and society, culture—simply astounding! . . ." (Akulína listened to him with devouring attention, her lips slightly parted, like those of a child.)—"But what am I telling thee all this for?"—he added, turning over on the ground. "Of course, thou canst not understand!"

"Why not, Viktór Alexándrovitch? I have understood—I have understood everything."

"Did any one ever see such a girl!"

Akulína dropped her eyes.

"You did not use to talk to me formerly in that

way, Viktór Alexándrovitch,"—she said, without raising her eyes.

"Formerly? . . . formerly! Just see there, now! . . . . Formerly!"—he remarked, as though vexed.

Both maintained silence for a while.

"But I must be off,"—said Viktór, and began to raise himself on his elbow. . . . .

"Wait a little longer,"—articulated Akulína, in a beseeching voice.

"What 's the use of waiting? . . . I have already bade thee farewell, have n't I?"

"Wait,"—repeated Akulína.

Viktór stretched himself out again, and began to whistle. Still Akulína never took her eyes from him. I could perceive that she had grown somewhat agitated: her lips were twitching, her pale cheeks had taken on a faint flush. . . .

"Viktór Alexándrovitch,"—she said at last, in a broken voice:—"'t is sinful of you . . . sinful of you, Viktór Alexándrovitch: by heaven, it is!"

"What 's sinful?"—he asked, knitting his brows, and he half rose and turned toward her.

"'T is sinful, Viktór Alexándrovitch. You might at least speak a kind word to me at parting; you might at least say one little word to me, an unhappy orphan. . . ."

"But what am I to say to thee?"

"I don't know; you know that better than I do,

Viktór Alexándrovitch. Here you are going away, and not a single word. . . How have I deserved such treatment?"

"What a queer creature thou art! What can I do?"

"You might say one little word. . . ."

"Come, thou 'rt wound up to say the same thing over and over,"—he said testily, and rose to his feet.

"Don't be angry, Viktór Alexándrovitch,"—she added hurriedly, hardly able to repress her tears.

"I 'm not angry, only thou art so stupid. . . . What is it thou wantest? I can't marry thee, can I? I can't, can I? Well, then, what is it thou dost want? What?" (He turned his face toward her, as though awaiting an answer, and spread his fingers far apart.)

"I want nothing . . . . . nothing,"—she replied, stammering, and barely venturing to stretch out to him her trembling arms:—"but yet, if you would say only one little word in farewell. . . ."

And the tears streamed down her face in a torrent.

"Well, there she goes! She 's begun to cry," said Viktór coldly, pulling his cap forward over his eyes.

"I want nothing,"—she went on, sobbing, and covering her face with both hands;—"but how

do I stand now with my family, what is my position? and what will happen to me, what will become of me, unhappy one? They will marry off the poor deserted one to a man she does not love. . . . . Woe is me!"

"O, go on, go on,"—muttered Viktór in an undertone, shifting from foot to foot where he stood.

"And if he would say only one word, just one. . . . . such as: 'Akulína, I . . . . .'"

Sudden sobs, which rent her breast, prevented her finishing her sentence—she fell face downward on the grass, and wept bitterly, bitterly. . . . Her whole body was convulsively agitated, the back of her neck fairly heaved. . . . . Her long-suppressed woe had burst forth, at last, in a flood. Viktór stood over her, stood there a while, and shrugged his shoulders, then wheeled round, and marched off with long strides.

Several minutes elapsed. . . . . She quieted down, raised her head, glanced around, and clasped her hands; she tried to run after him, but her limbs gave way under her—she fell on her knees. . . . . I could not restrain myself, and rushed to her; but no sooner had she glanced at me than strength from some source made its appearance,—she rose to her feet with a faint shriek, and vanished behind the trees, leaving her flowers scattered on the ground.

I stood there for a while, picked up the bunch of corn-flowers, and emerged from the grove into the fields. The sun hung low in the palely-clear sky, its rays, too, seemed to have grown pallid, somehow, and cold: they did not beam, they disseminated an even, almost watery light. Not more than half an hour remained before nightfall, and the sunset glow was only just beginning to kindle. A gusty breeze dashed swiftly to meet me across the yellow, dried-up stubble-field; small, warped leaves rose hastily before it, and darted past, across the road, along the edge of the woods; the side of the grove, turned toward the field like a wall, was all quivering and sparkling with a drizzling glitter, distinct but not brilliant; on the reddish turf, on the blades of grass, on the straws, everywhere around, gleamed and undulated the innumerable threads of autumnal spiders' webs. I halted. . . . I felt sad: athwart the cheerful though chilly smile of fading nature, the mournful terror of not far-distant winter seemed to be creeping up. High above me, cleaving the air heavily and sharply with its wings, a cautious raven flew past, cast a sidelong glance at me, soared aloft and, floating on outstretched wings, disappeared behind the forest, croaking spasmodically; a large flock of pigeons fluttered sharply from the threshing-floor and, suddenly rising in a cloud, eagerly dispersed over the fields —a sign of autumn! Some one was driving past

behind the bare hill, his empty cart rumbling loudly. . . .

I returned home; but the image of poor Akulína did not leave my mind for a long time, and her corn-flowers, long since withered, I have preserved to this day. . . .

VII

HAMLET OF SHSHTCHÍGRY COUNTY

During one of my excursions, I received an invitation to dine with a wealthy landed proprietor, who was also a sportsman, Alexánder Mikhaílovitch G * * *. His large village was situated five versts distant from the tiny hamlet where I had settled down at that time. I donned my dress-suit, without which I would not advise any one to leave home, even on a hunting-expedition, and set off for Alexánder Mikhaílovitch's house. The dinner was appointed for six o'clock; I arrived at five, and found a large number of nobles, in uniforms, civilian garb, and other arrays, already there. The host received me cordially, but immediately ran off to the butler's pantry. He was expecting an important dignitary and felt a certain perturbation, which was entirely incompatible with his independent position in the world and his wealth. Alexánder Mikhaílovitch had never married, and did not like women; it was bachelor society which assembled at his house. He lived on a grand scale, had augmented and refitted his ancestral mansion in magnificent style, imported every year from Moscow

fifteen thousand rubles' worth of wine, and, altogether, enjoyed the greatest respect. Alexánder Mikhaílovitch had long since resigned from the service, and aspired to no honours. . . . . What, then, induced him to invite the dignitary to be his guest, and agitate himself from daybreak on the day of the ceremonious dinner? That is a point which remains shrouded in the gloom of obscurity, as a certain attorney of my acquaintance was wont to say when asked whether he accepted bribes from willing givers.

On parting from my host, I began to stroll through the rooms. Almost all the guests were entire strangers to me; a dozen men were already seated at the card-tables. Among the number of these devotees of preference were two military men with noble but somewhat worn countenances; several civilians in tight, tall stocks and with pendent, dyed moustaches, such as are possessed only by decided but well-intentioned persons (these well-intentioned persons were pompously gathering up their cards, and casting sidelong glances at those who approached them, but without turning their heads) ; and five or six officials of the district with rotund paunches, plump, perspiring hands, and discreetly-impassive feet (these gentlemen were talking in low tones, smiling benignantly on all sides, holding their cards tightly against their shirt-fronts, and, when they trumped, they did not bang the table, but, on the

contrary, dropped their cards, with an undulating movement on the green cloth, and when they gathered in their tricks they produced a light, extremely courteous and decorous grating noise). The rest of the nobles were sitting on the divans and huddling in groups round the doors and windows; one landed proprietor, no longer young but of effeminate appearance, was standing in a corner, quaking and blushing, and twisting his watch-chain on his stomach with perturbation, although no one was paying any attention to him; other gentlemen, in round-tailed dress-coats and checked trousers, the work of a Moscow tailor, the perpetual member of the guild and master, Firs Kliúkhin, were chatting with unwonted ease of manner and alertness, freely turning their fat and bare napes; a young man of twenty, mole-eyed and fair-haired, clad in black from head to foot, was evidently intimidated, but smiled spitefully. . . .

I was beginning to be somewhat bored, however, when suddenly I was joined by a certain Voinítzyn, a young man who had not completed his studies, and who lived in Alexánder Mikhaílovitch's house in the capacity . . . . . it would be difficult to say in precisely what capacity. He was a capital shot, and knew how to train dogs. I had known him previously, in Moscow. He belonged to the category of young men who, at every examination, " played the dumb game,"—

that is to say, did not answer the professors' questions by a single word. These gentlemen were also called sidewhiskerites, by way of fine language. (This happened long ago, as you can easily see.) This is the way it was done: Voinítzyn, for example, was called up. Voinítzyn—who, up to that moment, had been sitting motionless and bolt upright on his bench, bathed from head to foot in boiling-hot perspiration, and rolling his eyes about slowly but stupidly—rose, hastily buttoned his undress uniform up to the throat, and stole sideways to the table of the examiners.—" Please take a ticket," the professor said to him, pleasantly. Voinítzyn stretched out his hand, and tremulously touched the package of tickets with his fingers.—" Be so good as not to pick and choose,"—remarked some irritable old man who had nothing to do with the matter, a professor from some other faculty, who had conceived a sudden hatred for the unlucky sidewhiskerite. Voinítzyn yielded to his fate, took a ticket, showed the number, and went off and took his seat near the window, while the man ahead of him answered his question. At the window, Voinítzyn never took his eyes from the ticket, unless it was to gaze about him slowly, as before, and otherwise he did not move a limb. But now the man ahead of him has answered his question, and the professors say to him: " Good, you may go," or even: " Good, sir, very good, sir," according to

his capacities. Then they call up Voinítzyn;—Voinítzyn rises, and approaches the table with firm steps.—" Read your ticket," they say to him. Voinítzyn lifts the ticket to his very nose with both hands, slowly reads it, and slowly lowers his hands.—" Well, sir, please give the answer," languidly articulates the same professor, throwing back his body, and folding his arms on his chest. A profound silence reigns.—" What have you to say? "—Voinítzyn maintains silence. He begins to get on the nerves of the old man who is not concerned.—" Come, say something! "—My Voinítzyn remains silent, just as though he had expired. His closely-clipped nape rears itself up in front of the curious glances of all his comrades. The eyes of the meddlesome old man are ready to pop out of his head: he has finally arrived at detestation of Voinítzyn.—" But this is strange," —remarks the other examiner:—" Why do you stand there like a dumb man? come now, don't you know? if you do, then speak."—" Allow me to take another ticket," articulates the unlucky wight dully. The professors exchange glances. —" Well, do so,"—replies the head-examiner, with a wave of the hand. Again Voinítzyn takes a ticket, again he goes off to the window, again he returns to the table, and again he maintains silence like that of a dead man. The unconcerned old man is ready to devour him alive. At last they drive him off, and place a cipher against his

name. You think: "Now he will go away, at least?" Nothing of the sort! He returns to his place, sits there in the same impassive manner until the end of the examination, and as he takes his departure he exclaims: "Well, that was like a hot bath! what a tough job!"—And he roams about Moscow all that day, from time to time clutching at his head, and bitterly upbraiding his unhappy lot. As a matter of course, he does not touch a book, and the next morning the same story is repeated. So then, this Voinítzyn joined me. We chatted together about Moscow, about sport.

"Would n't you like to have me introduce you to the leading wit of these parts?"—he suddenly whispered to me.

"Pray do."

Voinítzyn led me to a man of short stature, with a lofty curled crest and a moustache, in a cinnamon-brown dress-coat and a flowered neckerchief. His bilious, mobile features really did exhale cleverness and malice. His lips curled incessantly in a fleeting, caustic smile; his small black eyes, which he kept screwed up, peered forth audaciously from beneath uneven lashes. By his side stood a landed proprietor, a broad, soft, sweet man,—a regular Sugar-Honey,—and with only one eye. He laughed in advance at the witticisms of the little man, and seemed to be fairly rapturous with delight. Voinítzyn presented me to the

wit, whose name was Piótr Petróvitch Lupíkhin. We made acquaintance, and exchanged the preliminary greetings.

"And allow me to introduce to you my best friend,"—said Lupíkhin suddenly, in a sharp voice, seizing the sweet proprietor by the hand.—"Come now, don't hang back, Kiríla Selifánitch,"—he added:—"nobody is going to bite you. Here, sir,"—he went on, while the disconcerted Kiríla Selifánitch bowed as awkwardly as though his paunch were falling off:—"Here, sir, I recommend him to you, sir, a splendid noble. He enjoyed excellent health up to the age of fifty, and all of a sudden took it into his head to put himself through a course of treatment for his eyes, in consequence of which he has lost the sight of one of them. Ever since then, he has been treating his peasants with like success. . . . . Well, and they, of course, with the same devotion . . . ."

"What a fellow he is!"—muttered Kiríla Selifánitch—and burst out laughing.

"Speak out, my friend—ekh, finish what you were about to say,"—interpolated Lupíkhin.—"Why, the first you know, you may be elected judge, and you will be elected, see if you are n't. Well, of course the assessors will do your thinking for you, I suppose; for, you know, 't is necessary, in case of need, to understand how to enun-

ciate other people's ideas, at least. Perhaps the Governor will drop in;—he will ask: 'What makes the judge stammer?' Well, let us assume that they tell him: 'He has had a stroke of paralysis.'—'Then bleed him,' he will say. And that is unseemly in your position, you must admit yourself."

The sweet landed proprietor fairly roared with laughter.

"There, you see, he's laughing,"—pursued Lupíkhin, with a vicious glance at Kiríla Selifánitch's heaving paunch.—"And why should n't he laugh?"—he added, addressing me:—"he's full-fed, healthy, has no children, his serfs are not mortgaged, and he gives them medical treatment,—his wife is rather crack-brained." (Kiríla Selifánitch turned somewhat aside, as though he had not heard, and went on roaring with laughter.)—"I laugh also, and my wife eloped with a surveyor." (He grinned.)

"Why, did n't you know that? Certainly! She just took and ran away, and left a letter for me: 'My dear Piótr Petróvitch,' says she, 'excuse me: carried away by passion, I am departing with the friend of my heart. . . .' And the surveyor fascinated her simply because he did n't cut his finger-nails, and wore trousers like tights. You are surprised? Here's a frank man, you say.—I-i, good heavens, we steppe-dwellers

speak the truth straight out. But let us step aside. . . . . Why should we stand by the future judge? . . . . ."

He took my arm, and we walked off to the window.

" I bear the reputation of a wit here,"—he said to me in the course of our conversation:—" don't you believe it. I am simply an embittered man, and I am swearing aloud: that is why I am so free and easy. And, as a matter of fact, why should I stand on ceremony? I don't care a copper for anybody's opinion, and am not in quest of anything; I am spiteful,—what of that! A spiteful man stands in no need of brains, at least. And you would n't believe how refreshing it is. . . . Here, now, for example,—here now, just look at our host! Now why is he rushing about, for mercy's sake, constantly looking at his watch, smiling, perspiring, assuming a pompous mien, torturing us with hunger? A pretty thing, truly, a dignitary! There, there he is rushing about again,—he has even begun to limp,—just look!"

And Lupíkhin laughed shrilly.

" 'T is a great pity that there are no ladies,"—he went on, with a deep sigh:—" it is a bachelor dinner,—and there 's no profit for the likes of us in that. Look, look,"—he suddenly exclaimed:—" yonder comes Prince Kozélsky—that tall man with the beard, in yellow gloves. It is immediately evident that he has been abroad . . . .

and he always arrives so late. I 'll tell you one thing, though: he 's as stupid as a pair of merchant's horses; and you just ought to see how condescendingly he talks to men like me, how magnanimously he deigns to smile at the amiable attentions of our hungry wives and daughters! . . . . And he sometimes makes a joke, although he lives here only temporarily;—but what jokes! Precisely as though he were sawing at a hawser with a dull knife. He can't endure me. . . . I 'll go and make my bow to him."

And Lupíkhin hastened to meet the Prince.

" And yonder comes my personal foe,"—he said, suddenly returning to me:—" do you see that fat man, with the dark-brown face, and the brush on his head,—yonder,—the one who has his cap clutched in his hand, and is making his way along the wall, and darting glances on all sides, like a wolf? I sold him for four hundred rubles a horse which was worth one thousand rubles, and that dumb beast now has a perfect right to despise me; but he is so devoid of capacity for thinking, especially of a morning, before tea, or immediately after dinner, that if you say to him: ' Good morning,' he will reply: ' what, sir? ' And yonder comes the General," went on Lupíkhin:—" a civilian general on the retired list, a bankrupt general. He has a daughter made of beet-root sugar and a scrofula factory. . . . Excuse me, I did n't mean to say that . . . . well, you understand.

Ah! and the architect has got here! A German, and with a moustache, and does n't know his business,—astounding!—But why should he know his business? all he has to do is to take bribes, and set up as many columns and pillars as possible for our ancient nobility." [1]

Again Lupíkhin began to laugh violently. . . . But suddenly a breathless agitation spread all over the house. The dignitary had arrived. The host fairly flew headlong to the anteroom. Behind him scurried several devoted domestics and zealous guests. . . . The noisy conversation was converted into a soft, agreeable murmur, resembling the humming of bees in their native hive in springtime. The irrepressible wasp, Lupíkhin, and the magnificent drone, Kozélsky, alone did not lower their voices. . . . And now, at last, the queen-bee entered—the dignitary entered. Hearts flew to greet him, heavy seated bodies rose; even the landed proprietor who had bought Lupíkhin's horse cheap, even that proprietor thrust his chin into his chest. The dignitary preserved his dignity to perfection: nodding his head backward, as though bowing, he uttered a few words of approval, each one of which began with the letter *a,* enunciated with a drawl through the nose;—with indignation which reached the pitch of biting, he stared at

[1] A pun is here intended. *Stolb,* a pillar or post, *stolbovói dvoryanin* (column-noble), a nobleman of ancient family.—TRANSLATOR.

Prince Kozélsky's beard, and gave the ruined civil General with the factory and the daughter the forefinger of his left hand. After a few moments, during the course of which the dignitary had managed to remark twice that he was very glad he had not arrived late for dinner, the whole company wended their way to the dining-room, big-wigs at the head.

Is it necessary for me to describe to the reader how the dignitary was given the principal seat, between the civil General and the Marshal of Nobility for the Government, a man with a free and dignified expression of countenance, which thoroughly matched his starched shirt-front, his capacious waistcoat, and his circular snuff-box filled with French snuff;—how the host fussed and ran about, and bustled, and urged the guests to eat, bestowed a smile in passing on the dignitary's back, and, standing in one corner, like a schoolboy, hurriedly swallowed a plate of soup, or a bit of roast beef;—how the butler served a fish an arshín and a half [1] in length, and with a nosegay in its mouth;—how the liveried servants, surly of aspect, gruffly plied each nobleman now with Malaga, now with dry Madeira, and how almost all the noblemen, especially the elderly ones, drank glass after glass, as though resigning themselves to a sense of duty:—how, in conclusion, bottles of champagne were cracked, and they

[1] Forty-two inches.—Translator.

began to drink toasts to the health of various persons? All this is, probably, but too familiar to the reader. But what struck me as especially noteworthy was an anecdote, related by the dignitary himself amid universal joyous silence.

Some one—the ruined General I think it was, a man acquainted with the newest literature—alluded to the influence of women in general, and upon young men in particular.—" Yes, yes,"—put in the dignitary:—" that is true; young men should be kept under strict discipline, otherwise they are likely to go out of their heads over every petticoat." (A smile of childlike mirth flitted across the faces of all the guests; the gratitude of one landed proprietor even glistened in his glance.)—" For young men are foolish." (The dignitary, probably with a view to increasing their importance, sometimes altered the generally-received accentuation, of words.)—"Now, there 's my son Iván, for instánce," he continued: " the fool is only twentý years of age, and all of a sudden he says to me: ' Dear little father, permit me to marry.' I say to him: ' Serve first, thou fool!' . . . . Well, then came despair, tears . . . . . but I 'm . . . you know . . . ." (The words " you know " the dignitary uttered with his belly rather than with his lips; then he remained silent a little while, and cast a majestic glance at his neighbour the General, at the same time elevating his eyebrows more than one might have expected

from him. The civilian General bowed his head pleasantly somewhat on one side, and winked the eye which was turned toward the dignitary with extreme rapidity.)—"And what do you think," —began the dignitary again, "now he writes to me, saying: 'Thanks, father, for having taught the fool a lessón.' . . . . That 's the way one must proceed."—All the guests entirely agreed with the narrator, as a matter of course, and seemed to brighten up as a result of the pleasure and instruction which they had received. . . . After dinner, the whole company rose and withdrew to the drawing-room with great but decorous uproar, as though it were permitted on this occasion. . . . . They sat down to play cards.

I managed to while away the evening, and having enjoined my coachman to have my calash ready at five o'clock on the following morning, I retired to rest. But it was my lot to make acquaintance on that same day with still another remarkable man.

In consequence of the multitude of guests who had arrived, no one had a bedroom to himself. In the small, greenish, and rather damp chamber to which Alexánder Mikhaílovitch's butler conducted me, there was already another guest, completely undressed. On catching sight of me, he briskly dived under the coverlet, covered himself up with it to his very nose, nestled about a little

in the spongy feather-bed, and quieted down, peering forth keenly from beneath the round border of his cotton nightcap. I stepped up to the other bed (there were only two in the room), undressed, and lay down in the damp sheets. My neighbour turned over in his bed. . . . . I wished him good night.

Half an hour elapsed. Despite my efforts, I could not get to sleep; useless and ill-defined thoughts followed one another in endless succession, persistently and monotonously, like the buckets of a pumping-machine.

" You are not sleepy, apparently,"—remarked my neighbour.

" As you see,"—I replied.—" And you 're not sleepy, either? "

" I 'm never sleepy."

" Why so? "

" Because I fall asleep I don't know why; I lie and lie, and then get to sleep."

" But why do you go to bed before you feel like sleeping? "

" Why, what would you have me do? "

I made no answer to my neighbour's question.

" I 'm surprised," he went on, after a brief pause:—" that there are no fleas here. I thought they were everywhere."

" You seem to regret them,"—I remarked.

" No, I don't regret them; but I like logical sequence in everything."

"You don't say so,"—I remarked to myself: "what words he uses!"

Again my neighbour was silent for a while.

"Would you like to make a bet with me?"—he suddenly said, in quite a loud voice.

"What about?"

I was beginning to find my neighbour amusing.

"H'm . . . . what about? Why, about this: I 'm convinced that you take me for a fool."

"Good gracious,"—I murmured in amazement.

"For a steppe-dweller, an ignoramus.—Confess. . . ."

"I have not the pleasure of knowing you,"—I returned.—"How have you arrived at the conclusion? . . . ."

"How? Why, from the mere sound of your voice: you answer me so carelessly. . . . But I 'm not in the least what you think. . . ."

"Permit me . . ."

"No, do *you* permit *me*. In the first place, I speak French quite as well as you do, and German even better; in the second place, I have spent three years abroad: I have lived eight months in Berlin alone. I have studied Hegel, my dear sir, I know Goethe by heart; more than that, I was for a long time in love with the daughter of a German professor, and married at home a consumptive young gentlewoman,—a bald, but very re-

markable individual. Consequently, I am a berry from the same field as yourself; I 'm not a rustic steppe-dweller, as you suppose. . . . I also am bitten with reflex action, and there 's nothing direct about me. . . ."

I raised my head, and looked at the eccentric with redoubled attention. In the dim light of the night-lamp I could barely distinguish his features.

" There now, you are staring at me,"—he went on, adjusting his nightcap,—" and, probably, you are asking yourself: ' How comes it that I did not notice him to-day? ' I will tell you why you did not notice me:—because I do not raise my voice; because I hide behind other people, stand behind doors, converse with no one; because the butler, as he passes me with a tray, elevates his elbow in advance on a level with my breast. . . . And whence does all this proceed? From two causes: in the first place, I am poor, and in the second, I am resigned. . . . Speak the truth, you did n't observe me, did you? "

" I really did not have the pleasure. . . ."

" Well, well, yes,"—he interrupted me:—" I knew it."

He raised himself half-way, and folded his arms; the long shadow of his nightcap flitted from the wall to the ceiling.

" Come now, confess,"—he suddenly added, casting a sidelong glance at me:—" I must seem

to you a great eccentric, an original, as they say, or, perhaps, even something still worse; perhaps you think that I pretend to be an eccentric?"

" I must repeat to you, once more, that I do not know you. . ."

He cast down his eyes for a moment.

" Why I have so unexpectedly set to talking with you,—with a man who is an entire stranger to me,—the Lord—the Lord only knows! " (He sighed.) " 'T is not in consequence of the affinity of our souls! Both you and I are respectable persons, egoists; you have nothing to do with me, neither have I the slightest thing to do with you; is n't that so? But neither of us is sleepy. . . . Why not have a chat? I 'm in the mood, and that rarely happens with me. I 'm timid, you see, and not timid in virtue of the fact that I am a provincial, without official rank, a poor man, but in virtue of the fact that I am a frightfully conceited man. But sometimes, under the influence of propitious circumstances, accidents, which I am unable, however, either to define or foresee, my timidity disappears completely, as on the present occasion, for instance. You might set me face to face with the Dalai-Lama himself now,—and I 'd ask him for a pinch of snuff. But perhaps you want to go to sleep? "

" On the contrary,"—I hastily returned:—" I find it very agreeable to chat with you."

" That is, I amuse you, you mean to say. . . .

So much the better. . . . So then, sir, I must inform you, that I am called an original in these parts; that is to say, I am so called by those from whose tongues my name chances, accidentally, to fall, along with other trifling things. 'No one is greatly concerned as to my fate.' . . . They think to wound me. . . . . O my God! if they only knew . . . why, I 'm perishing precisely because there is positively nothing original about me, nothing except such sallies as my present conversation with you, for example; but, you see, those sallies are n't worth a copper coin. That 's the very cheapest and most vulgar sort of originality."

He turned his face toward me and waved his hands.

"My dear sir!"—he exclaimed:—"My opinion is, that the originals are the only people who enjoy life on earth; they alone have the right to live. *Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre,* some one has said.—You see,"—he added in an undertone:—"what pure French I speak. What care I if a man has a great and capacious head, and understands everything, knows a great deal, and keeps abreast of the times,—but has nothing special of his own! It merely makes one storehouse for commonplaces more in the world,—and who derives any satisfaction out of that? No, be stupid if you will, only do it in your own way! Have an odour of your own, that 's

what!—And do not imagine that my demands with respect to that odour are great. . . . . God forbid! There 's a mass of such originals: no matter in what direction you look, you behold an original; every living man is an original, but for some reason I have n't fallen into their category! . . .

" And yet,"—he went on, after a brief pause: —" what expectations I aroused in my youth! what a lofty opinion I cherished of myself before I went abroad, and during the early days after my return thence! Well, while I was abroad, I kept on the alert, I always made my way about alone, as is fitting for a fellow like me, who understands everything, is up to everything; and in the end, lo and behold,—he has n't understood the first thing! . . .

" An original, an original! " — he resumed, shaking his head reproachfully. . . . " They call me an original . . . . . as a matter of fact, it appears that there is n't a less original man in the world than your most humble servant. I must have been born in imitation of some one else. . . . By heaven, I must! I exist as though in imitation of the writers I have studied, I exist in the sweat of my brow; and I have studied, and fallen in love, and married, in conclusion, just as though it were not of my own volition, just as though I were performing some duty, executing some lesson,—who can explain it! "

He tore the nightcap from his head and flung it on the bed.

" Shall I tell you the story of my life? "—he asked me in a spasmodic voice:—" or, rather, a few incidents of my life? "

" Pray do."

" Or—no, I had better tell you how I came to marry. For marriage is an important affair, the test-stone of every man; in it, as in a mirror, is reflected . . . . But that comparison is too hackneyed. . . . If you permit, I will take a pinch of snuff."

He pulled a snuff-box from under his pillow, opened it, and began to talk again, waving the open box.

" Put yourself in my position, my dear sir.—Judge for yourself, what profit,—come now, for mercy's sake, tell me,—what profit could I extract from Hegel's encyclopædia? Tell me, what has that encyclopædia in common with Russian life? And how would you have me apply it to our existence—and not that encyclopædia alone, but German philosophy in general . . . . I will say more—German science? "

He leaped up in his bed, and muttered in an undertone, viciously setting his teeth:

" Ah, that 's the point, that 's the point! . . . . . Then why didst thou trot off abroad? Why didst not thou stay at home, and study the life which surrounded thee on the spot? Thou wouldst have

learned its requirements and its future, and thou wouldst have become clear concerning thine own vocation, so to speak. . . . But good gracious," —he continued, again altering his voice, as though defending himself and quailing:—" how is a man like me to inform himself about a thing concerning which not a single wiseacre has written anything in a book! I would be glad to take lessons from it, from that same Russian life,—but it maintains silence, my dear little dove. ' Understand me,' it says, 'as I am;' but that is beyond my power: give me the deductions, present to me the conclusion of the matter. . . . . The conclusion?— 'Here is the conclusion for thee,' people say: 'just listen to our Moscow folks—they 're nightingales, are n't they? '—And precisely therein lies the calamity, that they warble like Kursk nightingales, but don't talk like human beings. . . . . So I meditated and meditated,—you see, science is the same everywhere, apparently, and is the only genuine thing,—and took and set off, with God's aid, to foreign parts, to infidels. . . . What would you have,—I was besotted with youth, with pride. I was n't willing, you know, to swim in fat before my time, although 't is healthy, they say. However, the person who has not been endowed by nature with flesh, will never behold fat on his body!

" But I believe,"—he added, after reflecting a while,—" that I promised to narrate to you how

I came to get married. Listen, then. In the first place, I must inform you that my wife is no longer in the world; in the second place . . . . but in the second place, I perceive that I must tell you about my youth, otherwise you will not understand anything. . . . . You are sure you don't want to go to sleep? "

" No, I don't."

" Very good. Just listen . . . . how vulgarly Mr. Kantagriúkhin is snoring yonder, in the next room!—I am the son of poor parents,—parents, I say, because, in addition to a mother, there is a tradition that I had a father also. I do not remember him; they say that he was a man of limited capacity, had a huge nose and freckles, and took snuff up one nostril; in my mother's bedroom hung his portrait, in a red uniform with a black collar reaching up to his ears, and remarkably hideous. They used to lead me past it on my way to a whipping, and on such occasions my mother always pointed it out to me, with the remark: ' Thou wouldst have fared still worse at his hands.' You can imagine how greatly this encouraged me. I had neither brothers nor sisters; that is to say, to tell the truth, I did have a sort of wretched little brother, who was afflicted with the rickets, but he died very soon. . . . And why should the rickets perch in the Zhígry district of the Kursk government? But that is not the point. My mother busied herself over my

education with the headlong zeal of a landed proprietress of the steppes; she busied herself with it from the very magnificent day of my birth until I had attained the age of sixteen. . . . Do you follow the thread of my story?"

"Certainly, proceed."

"Well, good. So then, when I had attained the age of sixteen, my mother without delay took and dismissed my French tutor and the German Philipóvitch from the Greeks of Nyézhin:[1] she took me to Moscow, entered me in the university, and surrendered her soul to the Almighty, leaving me in the hands of my own uncle, the pettifogger Koltún-Babúr, a bird who was known to more than the Zhígry district. This own uncle of mine, the pettifogger Koltún-Babúr, robbed me of my last penny, as is the custom. . . . But again, that is not the point. I entered the university, to do my mother justice, tolerably well prepared; but the lack of originality was discernible in me even then. My childhood had differed in no respect from the childhood of other youths: I had grown up as stupid and drowsy as though I had been under a feather-bed, and began just as early to commit verses to memory, and to languish under the pretext of an inclination to dreaminess . . . . . and all the rest of it. In the university I did not travel along a new road: I immediately fell into a circle. Times were

[1] A Greek colony in Little Russia.—Translator.

different then. . . . . But perhaps you do not know what a circle is?—I remember that Schiller says somewhere:

"Gefährlich ist's, den Leu zu wecken,
Und schrecklich is des Tigers Zahn,
Doch das schrecklichste der Schrecken—
Das ist der Mensch in seinem Wahn!

"He did not mean to say that, I assure you; he meant to say: 'Das is ein *circle* . . . . . in der Stadt Moskau!'"

"But what is it that you find dreadful in a circle?"—I inquired.

My neighbour snatched up his nightcap, and pulled it down on his nose.

"What is it that I find dreadful?"—he shouted.—"Why, this: a circle—why, that is the perdition of all independent development; a circle is a hideous substitute for society, women, life; a circle. . . . O, but wait; I will tell you what a circle is! A circle is that sluggish and drowsy dwelling together, side by side, to which the significance and aspect of a sensible deed is attached; a circle substitutes arguments for conversation, trains men to fruitless jabbering, diverts you from solitary, beneficent work, infects you with the literary itch; it robs you, in short, of your freshness and virginal firmness of soul. A circle —why, it is staleness and boredom under the

name of brotherhood and friendship, a concatenation of misunderstandings and cavillings under the pretext of frankness and sympathy; in a circle—thanks to the right of every friend to thrust his unwashed fingers, at all seasons, at all hours, straight into the interior of a comrade—no one has a pure, untouched spot in his soul; in a circle, men bow down before an empty, fine talker, a conceited clever fellow, a premature old man; they bear aloft in their arms the talentless scribbler of verses, but with 'hidden' thoughts; in a circle, young fellows of seventeen discourse craftily and wisely of women, or talk with them just as in a book,—and what things they talk about! In a circle cunning eloquence flourishes; in a circle, men watch each other in a way not at all inferior to police officials. . . . O circle! thou art not a circle: thou art an enchanted ring, in which more than one honest man has gone to destruction!"

"Come, you are exaggerating, allow me to observe to you,"—I interrupted him.

My neighbour stared at me in silence.

"Perhaps,—the Lord knows,—perhaps I am. But, you see, only one pleasure is left to fellows like me—to exaggerate. So, sir, in this manner I spent four years in Moscow. I am not able to describe to you, my dear sir, with what rapidity, with what frightful rapidity, that time passed; it even makes me sad and vexed to recall

it. 'T is as though you rose in the morning and went coasting down hill on a sled. . . . . The first you know, lo! you have reached the end; and already it is evening; here 's the sleepy servant pulling off your coat,—and you change your dress, and wend your way to your friend, and set to smoking a pipe, and drinking glasses of weak tea, and discussing German philosophy, love, the eternal sun of the spirit, and other remote objects. But there also I met original, independent people; no matter how capricious one of them might be, no matter how much he hid himself in a corner, still nature would assert her rights; I alone, unhappy wight, moulded myself like soft wax, and my miserable nature did not display the slightest resistance! In the meantime, I had reached the age of one and twenty. I entered into possession of my inheritance, or, to speak more accurately, of that portion of my inheritance which my guardian had graciously seen fit to leave me, gave a power of attorney to manage all my hereditary estates to an emancipated house-serf, Vasíly Kudryásheff, and went abroad to Berlin. I remained abroad, as I have already had the honour to inform you, three years. And what came of that? There, abroad, also, I remained the same un-original being. In the first place, there 's no disputing the fact, that I did not make acquaintance with the actual Europe, with European existence, not the least bit; I listened

to the German professors, and read German books on the very spot of their birth . . . . . that is all the difference there was. I led an isolated life, just as though I had been a monk; I consorted with retired lieutenants who were oppressed, like myself, with a thirst for knowledge, but were very dull of understanding, and not endowed with the gift of words; I frequented the society of dull-witted families from Pénza and other grain-producing governments; I lolled in the cafés, read the newspapers, went to the theatre in the evenings. I had little acquaintance with the natives of the country, I talked with them in a constrained sort of way, and never saw a single one of them at my own quarters, with the exception of two or three intrusive young fellows of Jewish extraction, who kept incessantly running to me and borrowing money from me,—luckily, *der Russe* was confiding. A strange freak of chance at last took me into the house of one of my professors; and this was the way it came about: I went to him to enter myself in his course, and the first I knew he suddenly invited me to spend the evening with him. This professor had two daughters, twenty-seven years of age, such buxom girls—God bless them!—such magnificent noses, curls in papers, pale-blue eyes, and red hands with pallid nails. One was named Linchen, the other Minchen. I began to frequent the professor's house. I must tell you that that

professor was not exactly stupid, but cracked as it were; he talked quite coherently on the lecture-platform, but at home he lisped, and kept his spectacles always on his forehead; moreover, he was an extremely learned man. . . . And what came of it? All of a sudden, I took it into my head that I had fallen in love with Linchen,—and for six whole months I thought so. I talked very little to her, it is true,—I chiefly stared at her; but I read aloud to her divers affecting compositions, pressed her hand on the sly, and of an evening meditated by her side, gazing intently at the moon, or simply into the air. Moreover, she did make such capital coffee! . . . .' What more do I want?' I thought to myself. One thing troubled me: at the very moments of inexpressible bliss, as the saying is, I always had a pain in the lower part of my chest, for some reason or other, and an acute, cold chill coursed through my stomach. At last, I could endure such happiness no longer, and I fled. I spent two whole years abroad after that: I was in Italy, in Rome I stood in front of the ' Transfiguration,' in Florence in front of the ' Venus '; all at once, I went into exaggerated raptures, as though seized with a fit of ferocity; in the evenings I scribbled verses, and started a diary; in a word, I conducted myself there as everybody does. And yet, just see how easy it is to be original. I understand nothing about painting and sculpture, for example.

. . . I might simply have said that aloud . . . . . no, impossible. I engage a cicerone, and run and look at the frescoes. . . ."

Again he dropped his eyes, and again flung off his nightcap.

" So, at last, I returned to my native land,"—he went on, in a weary tone:—" I arrived in Moscow. In Moscow I underwent an amazing change. Abroad I had chiefly held my tongue, but here, all of a sudden, I began to talk with unexpected boldness, and at the same time, conceived God knows what lofty opinion of myself. Indulgent people turned up, to whom I appeared something very like a genius; but I was not able to maintain myself at the height of my glory. One fine morning a calumny sprang into existence with regard to me (who brought it forth into the light of God, I know not: some old maid of the male sex, it must have been,—there 's a lot of such old maids in Moscow),—sprang into existence, and began to put forth shoots and runners, just as though it had been a strawberry-plant. I got confused, tried to jump out of it, to break asunder the adhesive threads,—but it could n't be done. . . . . I went away. In that case also, I proved myself an absurd man; I ought to have quite quietly awaited the attack, waited for this misfortune to run its course, just as one awaits the end of nettlerash, and those same indulgent persons would again have opened

their arms to me, those same ladies would again have smiled at my speeches. . . . . But there 's the pity of it: I 'm not an original man. Conscientiousness, you will be pleased to observe, suddenly awoke in me: for some reason, I became ashamed to chatter, chatter without ceasing, to chatter—yesterday on the Arbát, to-day on the Trubá, to-morrow at the Sivtzevóy-Vrázhek.[1] And forever about the selfsame thing. . . . And was it wanted? Just look at the genuine warriors in that career: that is a matter of no consequence to them; on the contrary, that is all they require; some of them will toil twenty years with their tongues, and always in the same direction. . . . That 's what confidence in one's self and self-conceit will do for a man! And I had it, too,—self-conceit,—and it has not entirely quieted down even yet. . . . But the fatal point, I will repeat it once more, is, that I am not an original man, I stopped short in mid-career: nature should have allotted to me a great deal more conceit, or not given me any at all. But, at first, I really did have a pretty hard time: in addition to this, my trip abroad had completely exhausted my resources, and I did not wish to marry a merchant's widow, with a youthful but already flabby body, in the nature of jelly, and so I withdrew to my estate in the country. I think,"—added

[1] Squares and streets in Moscow.—TRANSLATOR.

my neighbour, casting another sidelong glance at me,—" that I may pass over in silence my first impressions of country life, allusions to the beauty of nature, the tranquil charm of solitude, and so forth. . . ."

" You may, you may,"—I replied.

" The more so,"—pursued the narrator,—" as all that is nonsense,—at least, so it seems to me. I got as bored in the country as a locked-up puppy, although I admit that, as I passed, for the first time, in springtime, on my homeward journey, through the familiar birch-grove, my head began to swim and my heart to beat with confused, sweet anticipation. But these sweet anticipations, as you yourself know, never are realised, but, on the contrary, other things come to pass, which you are not in the least expecting, such as: murrain, tax-arrears, sales at public auction, and so forth, and so forth. I made shift to live from day to day, with the assistance of the peasant overseer Yákoff, who had superseded the former manager, and proved, later on, to be as great a thief as he, if not even greater than he, and who poisoned my existence, into the bargain, with the odour of his tarred boots. . . . I one day called to mind a neighbouring family, with whom I was acquainted, consisting of the widow of a retired Colonel and her two daughters, ordered my drozhky harnessed, and drove off to my neigh-

bours. That day must forever remain memorable to me; six months later, I married the Coloneless' second daughter. . . ."

The narrator hung his head, and raised his arms to heaven.

"And yet,"—he went on with fervour:—"I do not wish to inspire you with a bad opinion of my deceased wife. God forbid! She was the noblest, kindest creature, a loving creature, and capable of every sacrifice, although I must confess, between ourselves, if I had not had the misfortune to lose her, I probably should not have been in a position to chat with you to-day, for there still exists, in the cellar of my cherry-shed,[1] a beam on which I repeatedly made preparations to hang myself!

"Some pears,"—he began again, after a brief pause,—"must be allowed to lie for a certain time in the cellar, in order, as the saying is, to acquire their real savour; my deceased wife, evidently, also belonged to that sort of products of nature. Only now do I do her full justice. Only now, for example, do the memories of certain evenings, which I spent with her before the wedding, fail to arouse in me the slightest bitterness, but, on the contrary, affect me almost to tears. They were not wealthy people; their house, very old, of wood, but comfortable, stood

[1] In districts where the winter is too severe for unprotected cherry-trees, they are planted in a roughly-roofed, deep trench.—TRANSLATOR.

on a hill between a neglected park and an overgrown yard. At the foot of the hill flowed a river, which was barely visible through the dense foliage. A large veranda led from the house to the garden; in front of the veranda flaunted a long flower-bed, covered with roses; at each end of the bed grew two acacias, which in their youth had been interwoven in the form of a spiral by the deceased owner. A little further off, in the very thickest part of the neglected raspberry-plot, which had run wild, stood an arbour, very artfully painted inside, but so aged and decrepit outside, that it made one uncomfortable to look at it. A glazed door led from the veranda into the drawing-room; and in the drawing-room this is what presented itself to the curious gaze of the observer: in the corners, tiled stoves; a discordant piano on the right, loaded down with manuscript music; a divan, upholstered in faded sky-blue material with whitish patterns; a circular table; two étagères, with trifles of porcelain and glass beads dating from the time of Katherine II; on the wall, the familiar portrait of a fair-haired young girl with a dove on her bosom and her eyes rolled heavenward; on the table, a vase filled with fresh roses. . . . . You see how minutely I describe. In that drawing-room and on that terrace the entire tragicomedy of my love was enacted. My neighbour's wife herself was a spiteful woman, with a permanent hoarseness of malice in

her throat,—a nagging and quarrelsome person; one of her daughters, Véra, was in no way different from ordinary young country gentlewomen; the other was Sófya,—and I fell in love with Sófya. The two sisters had still another room, their common bedroom, with two innocent little wooden beds, yellowish albums, mignonette, and portraits of their friends, male and female, drawn in pencil, and pretty badly done; among them one was especially noteworthy,—that of a gentleman with a remarkably energetic expression of countenance and a still more energetic signature, who in his youth had aroused incommensurable expectations, and had ended, like all the rest of us, in—nothing; with busts of Goethe and Schiller, with German books, withered wreaths, and other objects which had been preserved in commemoration. But I entered this room rarely and unwillingly: for some reason or other, my breathing was oppressed there. Moreover—strange to say! —I liked Sófya best of all when I was sitting with my back to her, or still more, probably, when I was thinking or meditating about her, especially in the evening, on the veranda. Then I gazed at the sunset glow, at the trees, at the tiny green leaves, which had already grown dark but were still distinctly discernible against the rosy sky; in the drawing-room, at the piano, sat Sófya, uninterruptedly playing some favourite, passionately pensive passage from Beethoven; the spite-

ful old woman snored regularly, as she sat on the divan; in the dining-room, illuminated by a flood of crimson light, Véra busied herself with the tea; the samovár hissed sportively, as though rejoicing over something; the cracknels broke with a merry snap, the teaspoons rattled resonantly against the cups; the canary-bird, which had been trilling ruthlessly all day long, had suddenly quieted down, and only now and then gave vent to a chirp, as though making an inquiry about something; sparse rain-drops fell from a light, transparent little cloud as it swept past. . . . And I sat and sat, and listened and listened, and my heart swelled, and again it seemed to me that I was in love. So, under the influence of an evening of this sort, I one day asked the old woman for her daughter's hand, and two months later I was married. It seemed to me that I loved her. . . . And even now, though it is time for me to know, yet, by heaven, I don't know even now whether I loved Sófya. She was a good-natured, clever, taciturn creature, with a warm heart; but, God knows why, whether from having lived so long in the country, or from some other causes, at the bottom of her soul (if there be such a thing as a bottom to the soul) she had a hidden wound, or, to express it better, she had a running sore, which nothing could heal, and neither she nor I was able to put a name to it. The existence of this wound I divined, of course, only long after the wedding.

And what efforts I made over her—all was to no avail! In my childhood I had a finch which the cat once held in her paws for a while: the finch was rescued and nursed, but it never recovered; it sulked, pined away, and ceased to sing. . . . The end of it was, that one night a mouse got into its open cage, and gnawed off its bill, in consequence of which, at last, it made up its mind to die. I know not what cat had held my wife in its claws, but she sulked and pined in exactly the same way as my unhappy finch. Sometimes it was evident that she herself wanted to shake her wings, to rejoice in the fresh air, in the sunshine, and at liberty; she would make the effort—and curl up in a ball! And yet she loved me: how many times did she assure me that she had nothing more to wish for,—whew, damn it!—and her eyes would darken the while. I thought to myself: 'Is n't there something in her past?' I made inquiries: I found that there had been nothing. Well, so now then, judge for yourself: an original man would have shrugged his shoulders, heaved a couple of sighs, and taken to living in his own way; but I 'm not an original being, I began to stare at the rafters. My wife had become so thoroughly corroded with all the habits of an old maid,—Beethoven, nocturnal rambles, mignonette, correspondence with her friends, albums, and so forth,—that it was utterly impossible for her to get used to any other mode of life, espe-

cially to the life of the mistress of the house; and yet, it is ridiculous for a married woman to languish with a nameless woe, and sing in the evening: 'Wake thou her not at dawn!'

"So, sir, after this fashion we enjoyed felicity for three years; in the fourth year Sófya died in childbed with her first child,—and, strange to say, I seemed to have had a presentiment that she would not be capable of giving me a daughter or a son, a new inhabitant for the earth. I remember her funeral. It was in the spring. Our parish church is small and old, the ikonostásis has turned black, the walls are bare, the brick floor is broken in places; on each side of the choir is a large, ancient holy picture. The coffin was brought in, and placed in the very centre, in front of the Imperial Door,[1] draped in a faded pall, and three candlesticks were set around it. The service began. The decrepit lay-reader, with his little pigtail behind, girt low on the hips with a green girdle, mumbled mournfully in front of the folding reading-desk; the priest, also aged, with a kindly and sightless face, in a lilac cope with yellow patterns, did his own part of the service and the deacon's also. The fresh young foliage of the weeping birches fluttered and whispered to the full extent of the open windows; the fragrance of the grass was wafted in from out of

[1] The double central door in the ikonostásis (image-screen), which corresponds to the chancel-rail in the Western Church.—TRANSLATOR.

doors; the red flame of the wax candles paled in the cheerful light of the spring day; the sparrows fairly filled the church with their twittering; and now and then, up under the cupola, resounded the ringing cry of a swallow which had flown in. The reddish-brown heads of a few peasants, who were zealously praying for the dead woman, rose and fell in the golden dust of the sun's rays; the smoke escaped from the orifice of the censer in a slender, bluish stream. I looked at the dead face of my wife. . . . My God! even death, death itself, had not released her, had not healed her wound: there was the same painful, timid, dumb expression,—as though she were not at her ease even in the grave. . . . My blood surged bitterly within me. She was a good, good creature, but she did a good thing for herself when she died!"

The narrator's cheeks reddened and his eyes grew dim.

"Having, at last, got rid of the heavy depression which took possession of me after the death of my wife,"—he began again,—"I conceived the notion of taking to business, as the saying is. I entered government service in the capital of the Government,[1] but the huge rooms of the governmental establishment made my head ache, and my eyes worked badly; and other causes presented themselves also, by the way. . . . . I re-

[1] Corresponding to a State in the United States.—TRANSLATOR.

tired. I wanted to go to Moscow, but, in the first place, I lacked the money; and, in the second place . . . . I have already told you that I have become resigned. This resignation came upon me both suddenly and not suddenly. In spirit I had long since become resigned, but my head still refused to bend. I ascribed the modest frame of my feelings and thoughts to the influence of country life, of unhappiness. . . . On the other hand, I had already long before noticed that almost all my neighbours, old and young, who had been frightened at first by my learning, by my trip abroad, and by the other opportunities of my education, had not only succeeded in becoming thoroughly accustomed to me, but had even begun to treat me, if not rudely, at least with sneering condescension, did not listen to me to the end when I was arguing, and in speaking with me no longer used the 'sir.'[1] I have also forgotten to tell you that during the course of the first year after my marriage I had tried my hand at literature, out of tedium, and had even sent an article to a newspaper,—a story, if I mistake not; but some time afterward I received a polite letter from the editor, in which, among other things, he said that while it could not be denied that I had brains, it could be denied that I had talent, and in literature talent was necessary. In addition to

[1] The addition of the letter *s* to words, here indicated, is not precisely "sir" or "madam," but a courteous, lesser equivalent, which must be rendered thus.—TRANSLATOR.

this, it came to my knowledge that a man from Moscow, who chanced to be passing through,—an extremely amiable young fellow, by the way,—had referred to me in passing as an extinct and empty man, at an evening party at the Governor's. But my semi-voluntary blindness still continued: I did n't want to 'box my own ears,' you know; at last, one fine morning, I opened my eyes. This is the way it came about. The chief of rural police dropped in to see me, with the purpose of calling my attention to a ruined bridge on my domains, which I positively had not the means of mending. As he washed down a bit of dried sturgeon with a glass of vódka, this patronising guardian of order reproved me in a paternal way for my thoughtlessness, but entered into my situation, and merely recommended me to order my peasants to throw on a little manure, lighted his pipe, and began to talk about the approaching elections. A certain Orbassánoff, an empty swashbuckler, and a bribe-taker to boot, was at that time a candidate for the honourable post of Marshal of the Nobility for the Government. Moreover, he was not noteworthy either for his wealth or for his distinction. I expressed my opinion concerning him, and rather carelessly at that: I must confess that I looked down upon Mr. Orbassánoff. The chief of police looked at me, tapped me affectionately on the shoulder, and said good-naturedly:—'Ekh, Vasíly Vasílievitch,

't is not for you and me to judge of such persons; —how can we? . . . . Let every one keep his proper place.' [1]—' Why, good gracious!'—I retorted with vexation, ' what difference is there between me and Mr. Orbassánoff?'—The chief took his pipe out of his mouth, opened his eyes very wide, and fairly burst with laughter. —' Come, you funny man,'—he said at last, through his tears: ' what a joke you have got off . . . . . ah! was n't that a good one!'—and he never stopped making fun of me until he departed, now and then nudging me in the ribs with his elbow and even addressing me as ' thou.' He went away at last. That was the last drop: the cup overflowed. I paced up and down the room a few times, halted in front of the mirror, stared for a long, long time at my disconcerted countenance, and, slowly sticking out my tongue, shook my head with a bitter smile. The veil fell from my eyes; I saw clearly, more clearly than I saw my face in the mirror, what an empty, insignificant, and useless, unoriginal man I was!"

The narrator made a brief pause.

" In one of Voltaire's tragedies,"—he went on dejectedly,—" a certain gentleman is delighted that he has reached the extreme limits of ill luck. Although there is nothing tragic in my fate, yet I must confess that I have tasted something of

[1] In Russian, literally: " Let the cricket know his hearth."—TRANSLATOR.

that sort. I have learned to know the venomous raptures of cold despair; I have learned by experience how sweet it is to lie, without haste, in bed for an entire morning and curse the day and hour of my birth;—I could not resign myself all at once. And, in fact, judge for yourself: my lack of money fettered me to my detested country-place; I was fit for nothing,—neither agriculture, nor the service, nor literature; I avoided the landed proprietors, books revolted me; for the dropsical and sickly-sentimental young ladies, who shook their curls and feverishly reiterated the word 'life,' I had ceased to be in the least attractive as soon as I ceased to chatter and go into ecstasies; I did not know how to isolate myself completely, neither could I do so. . . . I began to—what do you think?—I began to haunt my neighbours. As though intoxicated with scorn for myself, I purposely subjected myself to all sorts of petty humiliations. They passed me over at the table, they greeted me coldly and haughtily; at last, they took no notice whatever of me; they did not even allow me to mingle in the general conversation, and I myself used deliberately to back up from a corner some extremely stupid babbler, who at one time, in Moscow, would have kissed my feet, the hem of my cloak, in rapture. . . I did not even permit myself to think that I was surrendering myself to the bitter satisfaction of irony. . . . Good

heavens, what is irony in solitude! This, sir, is the way I behaved for several years in succession, and the way I am behaving up to the present time. . . ."

"Why, this is outrageous," growled the sleepy voice of Mr. Kantagriúkhin, from the adjoining room:—"What fool has taken it into his head to prate by night?"

The narrator briskly dived down under his coverlet and, timidly peering out, shook his finger at me.

"Sh . . . . . sssssh!"—he whispered; and, as though apologising and bowing in the direction of Mr. Kantagriúkhin's voice, he said respectfully:—"I obey, sir; I obey, sir; excuse me, sir. . . . . It is permissible for him to sleep, he has a right to sleep,"—he went on again in a whisper: "he must gather fresh strength, well, if only in order that he may eat with his usual satisfaction to-morrow. We have no right to disturb him. Moreover, I think I have told you all I wished; probably, you would like to go to sleep also. I wish you a good night."

The narrator turned over with feverish haste, and buried his head in his pillows.

"Permit me at least to inquire,"—I asked:—"with whom have I the honour . . . ."

He raised his head alertly.

"No, for God's sake,"—he interrupted me:—"don't ask my name of me or of others. Let me

remain for you an unknown being, Vasíly Vasílievitch, bruised by fate. Moreover, as an unoriginal man, I do not deserve to have a name of my own. . . . But if you absolutely insist upon giving me some appellation, then call me . . . . call me the Hamlet of Shshtchígry County. There are lots of such Hamlets in every county, but perhaps you have not encountered any others. . . . Herewith, farewell."

Again he buried himself in his feather-bed, and on the following morning, when they came to wake me, he was no longer in the room. He had departed at daybreak.

VIII

TCHERTOPKHÁNOFF AND NEDOPIÚSKIN

One hot summer day I was returning from the hunt in a peasant cart; Ermolái was dozing as he sat beside me, and bobbing his head forward. The slumbering hounds were jolting about like dead bodies under our feet. The coachman kept incessantly flicking the gadflies off the horses with his whip. The white dust floated in a light cloud after the cart. We drove into the bushes. The road became more full of pits, the wheels began to come in contact with the branches. Ermolái gave a start, and glanced around him. . . . "Eh!"—said he:—"why, there ought to be black-cock here. Let 's alight."—We halted and entered the tract of second growth and bushes. My dog hit upon a covey of birds. I fired, and was beginning to reload my gun when, suddenly, behind me, a loud crash made itself heard, and, parting the bushes with his hands, a man on horseback rode up to me.—"Pér-mit me to inquire," —he said, in an arrogant voice, "by what right you are shooting here, m' d'r s'r." [1]

The stranger spoke with unusual rapidity, ab-

[1] His pronunciation is indicated as affected.—Translator.

ruptly, and through his nose. I looked him in the face: never in my life had I beheld anything like him. Figure to yourself, dear readers, a tiny, fair-haired man with a little red snub-nose and a long red moustache. An octagonal Persian cap with a crimson cloth top covered his forehead to his very brows. He was clad in a long, threadbare, yellow Caucasian coat with black velveteen cartridge-sheaths on the breast and faded silver galloon on all the seams; across his shoulder hung his hunting-horn, a dagger projected from his belt. His emaciated, roman-nosed, sorrel horse staggered beneath him, like a drunken creature; two greyhounds, gaunt and wry-footed, pranced about between its legs. The face, the glance, the voice, every movement, the whole person of the stranger exhaled mad hardihood and boundless, unprecedented pride; his pale-blue, glassy eyes were shifty and squinting, like those of a tipsy man; he flung his head back, puffed out his cheeks, snorted and quivered all over, as though with excess of pride—for all the world like a turkey-cock. He repeated his question.

"I did not know that shooting here was forbidden,"—I replied.

"You are on my land here, my dear sir,"—he went on.

"Very well, I will go."

"But pér-mit me to inquire,"—he returned:

"have I the honour to explain myself with a noble?"

I mentioned my name.

"In that case, pray go on shooting. I am a noble myself, and am very glad to be of service to a noble. . . . . My name is Tchertop-khánoff, Panteléi."

He bent forward, gave a whoop, lashed his horse on the neck with his whip, shook his head, dashed aside, and crushed the paw of one of his dogs. The dog began to whimper shrilly. Tchertopkhánoff began to seethe and hiss, smote his horse on the head between the ears, sprang to the earth quicker than a flash of lightning, scrutinised the dog's paw, spat on the wound, kicked the animal in the side with his foot to stop its outcries, grasped the horse's forelock, and thrust his foot into the stirrup. The horse tossed its muzzle, elevated its tail, and darted sideways into the bushes; he went hopping after it on one leg, but vaulted into the saddle at last; he flourished his kazák whip like a man in a frenzy, blew a blaring blast on his horn, and galloped off. Before I could recover myself from this unexpected apparition of Tchertopkhánoff, suddenly, almost without a sound, a rather corpulent man of forty rode out of the bushes on a small, black nag. He drew up, removed from his head a green leather cap of military shape, and in a shrill, soft voice

asked me whether I had seen a rider on a sorrel horse. I replied that I had.

"In what direction did they[1] deign to ride?"—he went on, in the same tone, and without putting on his cap.

"In that direction, sir."

"I am greatly obliged to you, sir."

He chirruped, jogged his feet against the horse's ribs, and rode off at a trot,—jog-trot,—in the direction indicated. I watched him until his peaked cap vanished among the boughs. This new stranger did not in the least resemble his predecessor, so far as his external appearance was concerned. His face, round and puffy as a ball, expressed bashfulness, good-nature, and gentle resignation; his nose, which was also round and puffy and speckled with blue veins, betrayed the sensualist. Not a single hair remained on his head in front; at the back, thin red hair stuck out; his small eyes, which seemed to have been cleft with a cutting sedge, blinked amiably; his red, lush lips smiled sweetly. He wore a surtout with a standing collar and brass buttons, extremely threadbare, but clean; above the yellow tops of his boots, his fat calves were visible.

"Who is that?"—I inquired of Ermolái.

"That? Nedopiúskin, Tíkhon Ivánitch. He lives with Tchertopkhánoff."

[1] The respectful form of "he" or "she," according to the context.—TRANSLATOR.

"What is he,—a poor man?"

"He is n't rich; but then, Tchertopkhánoff has n't a brass cent."

"Then why has he taken up his abode with him?"

"Why, they have struck up a friendship, you see. The friend never goes anywhere without his friend. . . . . 'T is a regular case of whithersoever the steed goes with his hoofs, thither also goes the crab with his claws. . . ."

We emerged from the bushes; all at once, the two huntsmen began to "give the view-halloo" alongside of us, and a huge grey hare rolled over the oats, which were already fairly tall. In their wake, the harriers and harehounds leaped out of the edge of the woods, and in the wake of the dogs forth flew Tchertopkhánoff himself. He was not shouting nor urging them on, nor hallooing; he was panting and gasping; from his gaping mouth abrupt, unintelligible sounds broke forth from time to time; he dashed onward, with protruding eyes, and flogging his unhappy horse frantically with his kazák whip. The harehounds "overshot"; . . . . . the hare squatted, turned sharply back on its track, and dashed past Ermolái into the bushes. . . . . The hounds swept by.—"L-l-l-look o-o-out, l-l-l-look o-o-out!" faltered the fainting sportsman, with an effort, as though stammering:—"look out, my good man!" Ermolái fired . . . . the wounded hare

rolled like a spinning-top over the smooth, dry grass, gave a leap upward, and began to scream pitifully in the teeth of the dog which was rending him asunder; the harriers immediately dashed up.

Tchertopkhánoff flew off his horse like a tumbler pigeon, jerked out his dagger, ran up, straddling his legs far apart, to the dogs, with wrathful exclamations wrested from them the tortured hare, and with his face all twisted awry, plunged his dagger up to the very hilt into the creature's throat . . . . plunged it in, and began to cackle. Tíkhon Ivánitch made his appearance on the edge of the woods. "Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!" roared Tchertopkhánoff a second time. . . . "Ho-ho-ho-ho," repeated his comrade quietly.

"But, you know, it is n't the proper thing to hunt in the summer,"—I remarked, indicating the flattened oats to Tchertopkhánoff.

"'T is my field,"—replied Tchertopkhánoff, barely breathing.

He ripped up the hare, disembowelled it, and distributed the paws to the dogs.

"Charge the cartridge to me, my dear fellow," —he said, according to the rules of sport, addressing Ermolái.—"And as for you, my dear sir," —he added in the same abrupt and cutting voice: —"I thank you."

He mounted his horse.

"Pér-mit me to inquire . . . I forgot about that . . . your name and surname."

Again I introduced myself.

"Very glad to make your acquaintance. If you happen to come my way, pray drop in to see me. . . . . But where's that Fómka, Tíkhon Ivánitch?"—he went on testily:—"the hare has been run down in his absence."

"His horse tumbled down under him," replied Tíkhon Ivánitch, with a smile.

"Tumbled down? Orbassán tumbled down! Phew, pshaw! . . . . . Where is he, where is he?"

"Yonder—the other side of the wood."

Tchertopkhánoff lashed his horse on the muzzle with his kazák whip,[1] and galloped off at a breakneck pace. Tíkhon Ivánitch made me a couple of bows,—one for himself, one on his comrade's account,—and again set off at a trot through the bushes.

These two gentlemen had strongly excited my curiosity. . . . What could unite in the bonds of indestructible friendship two beings so utterly different? I began to make inquiries. This is what I learned.

Tchertopkhánoff, Panteléi Eremyéitch, bore the reputation throughout the whole countryside of being a dangerous and crackbrained man, an arrogant man and bully of the worst sort. He

[1] This nagáika is a cruel—a deadly—implement. It consists of a short, thick handle, jointed to a stiff "lash" of nearly the same length (both of rawhide), terminating in a small, flat disk, also of rawhide.—TRANSLATOR.

had served for a very brief period in the army, and had retired from it, "in consequence of unpleasantnesses," with that rank concerning which there exists a wide-spread opinion that a "chicken is not a bird"—that is, too insignificant to be considered as rank at all. He was descended from an ancient house which had once been wealthy; his ancestors had lived luxuriously after the manner of the steppes; that is to say, they welcomed bidden and unbidden guests and fed them to satiety, as though for slaughter; provided strange coachmen with half a dozen bushels of oats for their tróïka horses; kept musicians, singers, buffoons and hounds; travelled to Moscow in the winter in their own ponderous ancient coaches; on festival days supplied the populace with liquor and home-made beer; and sometimes were without a penny for months at a stretch, and subsisted on horse-provender.[1] Panteléi Eremyéitch's father inherited the property in a ruined condition; he, in his turn, also "caroused," and, dying, left to his only son and heir, Panteléi, the mortgaged hamlet of Bezsónovo, with thirty-five souls of the male sex and seventy-six of the female sex, together with fourteen desyatínas and an eighth of inconvenient land in the Kolobród waste, to which, however, the deceased possessed no documentary proofs of his ownership. The deceased had ruined himself

[1] Oatmeal and cornmeal (which last is known in the south of Russia) would come under this head.—TRANSLATOR.

in a very strange manner, it must be confessed —" domestic economy " had been his perdition. According to his ideas, a nobleman ought not to depend upon the merchants, the town-dwellers, and such-like " brigands," as he expressed it; he set up on his estate all sorts of handicrafts and workshops: " 'T is both more seemly and cheaper,"—he was wont to say: " 't is domestic economy! " He never got rid of that pernicious idea to the end of his life; and it ruined him. On the other hand, how he did enjoy himself! He never denied himself a single whim. Among other caprices, he once had constructed, according to his own designs, such a huge family carriage that, in spite of the vigorous efforts of the peasants' horses, which had been impressed from the entire village, along with their owners, it tumbled down at the first declivity, and went to pieces. Eremyéi Lúkitch (that was the name of Panteléi's father) caused a monument to be erected on the hill, but was not in the least disconcerted. He also took it into his head to build a church, on his own responsibility, of course, without the aid of an architect. He burned a whole forest to bake the bricks, he laid an enormous foundation, as though for the cathedral of a government capital, reared the walls, and began to construct the arch for the cupola: the cupola caved in. He rebuilt it,—again the cupola fell; he did it a third time, and for the third

time the cupola fell to pieces. My Eremyéi Lúkitch reflected. "There 's something wrong," he thought . . . . . "some damned witchcraft is mixed up with it . . . ." and all of a sudden he ordered that all the old peasant women in the village should be flogged. The women were flogged,—but the cupola refused to be constructed, nevertheless. He began to rebuild the peasants' cottages on a new plan, and all at his own expense; he built three cottages together in a triangle, and in the centre he erected a pole surmounted by a painted starling-house and a flag. He was in the habit of devising a fresh freak every day: now he made soup of burdock, again he shaved off the tails of the horses to make caps for his house-serfs, next he made preparations to replace flax with nettles, or to feed his pigs on mushrooms. . . . One day he read in *The Moscow News* an article by a landowner of the Khárkhoff Government, named Khryák-Khrupyórsky, concerning the advantages of morality in the life of the serfs, and on the very next day he issued an order to all the serfs that they should forthwith learn the Khárkhoff squire's article by heart. The serfs learned the article; their noble master asked them: "Did they understand what was written therein?" The overseer replied: "How could they fail to understand?" About the same time he commanded all his subjects, on the score of order and domestic

economy, to be numbered, and each one to have his number sewn on his collar. Each person, on meeting the master, used to call out: "Such-and-such a number is coming!" and the master would reply amiably: "Go thy way, and God protect thee!"

But, in spite of order and domestic economy, Eremyéi Lúkitch gradually got into very difficult straits: first he began to mortgage his estates, then he proceeded to sell them, and the last one, the ancestral nest, the large village with the unfinished church, was sold by the treasury, fortunately not during the lifetime of Eremyéi Lúkitch,—he could not have borne that blow,—but two weeks after his death. He managed to expire in his own house, in his own bed, surrounded by his own people, and under the supervision of his own medical man, but poor Panteléi inherited nothing except Bezsónovo.

Panteléi was already in the service, in the very thick of the above-mentioned "unpleasantnesses," when he heard of his father's death. He had recently attained the age of eighteen. From his very childhood, he had never quitted the parental roof, and under the guidance of his mother, an extremely amiable, but thoroughly dull-witted woman, Vasilísa Vasílievna, he had grown up a spoiled child, and a regular little country squire. She alone took charge of his education; Eremyéi Lúkitch, absorbed as he was in his experiments in

domestic economy, had no time for that. To tell the truth, he did once chastise his son with his own hands for pronouncing the letter Rtzy,[1] artzy; but that day, Eremyéi Lúkitch was profoundly and secretly afflicted; his best hound had been killed against a tree. However, Vasilísa Vasílievna's anxieties in regard to the education of Pantiúsha were confined to torturing effort alone; in the sweat of her brow she hired for him as governor an ex-soldier, an Alsatian, a certain Birchhoff (and to the day of her death, she trembled like a leaf before him: "Well," she said to herself, "if he resigns—I am lost! What shall I do? Where shall I find another teacher? Even this one I lured away from a neighbour with the greatest difficulty!"). And Birchhoff, like the shrewd man he was, immediately took advantage of his exceptional position: he drank himself dead drunk, and slept from morning till night. At the conclusion of his "course of sciences," Panteléi entered the service. Vasilísa Vasílievna was no longer living. She had died six months previous to this important event, from fright; in her dreams she had beheld a vision of a white man riding a bear. Eremyéi Lúkitch speedily followed his better half.

Panteléi, at the first news of his illness, gal-

[1] The Slavonic name of the letter *R*. Russian children are taught a certain amount of Old Church Slavonic, to enable them to understand the services of the Church, which are conducted exclusively in that language.—Translator.

loped home at breakneck speed, but did not find his parent alive. But what was the amazement of the respectful son, when he suddenly found himself converted from a wealthy heir into a pauper! Few are able to endure so abrupt a change. Panteléi grew unsociable and hard. From an honourable, lavish, amiable, though harebrained and hot-tempered fellow, he changed into an arrogant man and a bully, and ceased to hold intercourse with his neighbours,—he was ashamed before the wealthy, despised the poor, and behaved with unheard-of insolence to everybody—even to the constituted authorities; as much as to say: " I 'm a nobleman of ancient lineage." Once he came near shooting the commissary of rural police, who had entered his room with his cap on his head. The powers, of course, on their side, did not pardon his attitude, and, on occasion, made themselves felt; yet, all the same, he was feared, because he was a frightfully hot-tempered man, and at the second word proposed a duel with knives. At the slightest opposition, Tchertopkhánoff's eyes began to grow wild, his voice began to break. . . . . "Ah, va-va-va-va-va! " he stammered, "damn my head! " . . . . And bang it would go against the wall! And more than that, he was a clean man, and not mixed up in anything. Of course no one went to his house. . . . . And, nevertheless, his was a kind, even a great soul, in its way: he would not tolerate injustice or oppression even

toward a stranger; he stood up for his peasants by every means in his power.—"What?" he said, frantically slapping his own head:—"touch my people, my people? Not while I am Tchertopkhánoff! . . . ."

Unlike Panteléi Eremyéitch, Tíkhon Ivánitch Nedopiúskin could not cherish pride in his extraction. His father had come of the petty freeholder class, and only by dint of forty years of service had he acquired nobility. Mr. Nedopiúskin Senior had belonged to the category of people whom ill-luck pursues with an obduracy which resembles personal hatred. For the space of sixty whole years, from his very birth to his very death, the poor man had contended with all the poverty, infirmities, and calamities which are peculiar to petty people; he floundered like a fish on the ice, never had food or sleep enough, cringed, toiled, grieved, and languished, trembled over every kopék, actually suffered in the service, though innocent, and died, at last, in a garret or a cellar, without having succeeded in amassing either for himself or his children a bit of daily bread. Fate had shaken him as a dog shakes a hare in the chase. He had been a good and honest man, but had taken bribes—ranging from a twenty-kopék piece to two rubles, inclusive. Nedopiúskin had had a wife, a thin, consumptive woman; and he had had children: luckily, they had all died soon, with the exception of Tíkhon

and a daughter Mitrodóra, by profession a "dandy of the merchant class," who, after many sorrowful and ridiculous adventures, had married a retired pettifogger. Mr. Nedopiúskin Senior had managed, during his lifetime, to get Tíkhon appointed as supernumerary official in a chancellery; but immediately after his parent's death, Tíkhon resigned. The eternal trepidations, the torturing battle with cold and hunger, the melancholy dejection of his mother, the toilsome, anxious despair of his father, the rough oppressions of landlords and shopkeepers,—all this daily, unintermittent woe had bred in Tíkhon inexpressible timidity: at the very sight of his superior official he would begin to quake and turn faint, like a captured bird. He abandoned the service. Indifferent, and perhaps derisive, nature imbues people with various capacities and inclinations, which are not at all in accordance with their position in society and with their means; with the care and love peculiar to her, she had moulded Tíkhon, the son of the poverty-stricken official, into a sensitive, indolent, soft, impressionable being, addicted exclusively to enjoyment, gifted with an excessively delicate sense of smell and taste . . . . had moulded him, carefully put on the finishing touches, and had left her production to grow up on sour cabbage and putrid fish. But he did grow up, that product of hers, and began, as the saying goes, to "live." Then the fun began. Fate,

which had unremittingly tormented Nedopiúskin Senior, began on his son: evidently, she had acquired a taste. But with Tíkhon she adopted a different course: she did not torture him,—she amused herself with him. She never once drove him to despair, never made him experience the mortifying torture of hunger, but she drove him all over Russia, from Velíky-Ustiúg to Tzárevo-Koksháisk, from one humiliating and ridiculous employment to another: now she promoted him to be "majordomo" to a vixenish and splenetic benefactress of noble birth; then appointed him at the head of the domestic chancellery of a mole-eyed nobleman with his hair clipped in the English fashion; then made him half-butler, half-jester to a master of the hounds. . . . . In a word, Fate forced poor Tíkhon to drain drop by drop, and to the last drop, the whole bitter and venomous potion of an inferior existence. He served, in his time, the ponderous caprice, the sleepy and spiteful tedium, of idle gentlefolk. . . . . How many times, alone in his chamber, dismissed at last with the words "God be with thee" [1] after a horde of guests had amused themselves with him to their fill, had he vowed, all flushed with shame, with cold tears of despair in his eyes, to run away secretly that very day, to try his luck in the town, to find himself some petty place, if only that of a copying-clerk; or,

[1] Equivalent to polite dismissal.—TRANSLATOR.

once for all, to die of hunger in the street. But, in the first place, God did not give him the strength for that; in the second place, timidity began to torment him; and, in the third place, in conclusion,—how was he to obtain a place for himself, whom was he to ask? "They won't give me one," the unhappy man would whisper, as he tossed dejectedly on his bed: "they won't give me one!" On the following day, he would begin to bear the yoke again. His position was all the more painful, in that nature had not troubled herself to endow him with even a small modicum of those capacities and gifts without which the part of jester is almost impossible. For example, he could not dance until he dropped with fatigue in a bear's skin worn wrong side out; neither could he play the buffoon and the courtier in the immediate vicinity of freely used dog-whips; when put out of doors naked at a temperature of twenty degrees below zero, he sometimes caught cold; his stomach could digest neither wine mixed with ink and other filth, nor toadstools and poison-mushrooms crumbled up in vinegar. The Lord knows what would have become of Tíkhon, if the last of his benefactors, a distiller who had acquired wealth, had not taken it into his head, in a jovial hour, to add a codicil to his will: "And to Zyóza (also called Tíkhon) Nedopiúskin I bequeath for eternal and hereditary possession my village of Bezselendyéevka, acquired by my-

self, together with all its dependencies." Several days later, the benefactor died of a stroke of paralysis, over a sterlet soup. There was a commotion; the officers of the law made a descent and affixed seals to the property in the regular form. The relatives assembled; the will was opened; they read it, and demanded Nedopiúskin. Nedopiúskin presented himself. The majority of the assembly were aware of the post which Tíkhon Ivánitch had occupied under his benefactor; deafening exclamations, jeering congratulations, were showered upon him on his appearance. "The landed proprietor, there he is, the new landed proprietor!"—yelled the other heirs.—"Well, now you know,"—put in one well-known jester and wit: "Now, really, you know, one may say . . . . . really, you know . . . . that . . . . is what is called . . . . that 's . . . . . the heir." And all fairly burst with laughter. For a long time, Nedopiúskin would not believe in his good fortune. They showed him the will,—he turned scarlet, screwed up his eyes, began to brandish his arms, and fell to weeping in torrents. The noisy laughter of the assembly changed into a thick and unanimous roar. The village of Bezselendyéevka consisted, in all, of two-and-twenty serfs; no one greatly begrudged it; therefore, why not have some sport out of it? One heir only, a man from Petersburg, a pompous man with a Grecian nose and the most noble ex-

pression of countenance, Rostisláff Adámitch Schtoppel, could not endure it, moved up sideways to Nedopiúskin, and stared at him arrogantly over his shoulder. "So far as I can see, my dear sir,"—he said, in a scornfully-careless manner, "you have been living with the respected Feódor Feódorovitch in the capacity of jester, or servant, so to speak?" The gentleman from Petersburg expressed himself in insufferably clear, bold, and regular language. The flustered, agitated Nedopiúskin did not catch the words of the strange gentleman, but all the others immediately fell silent; the wit smiled condescendingly. Mr. Schtoppel rubbed his hands and repeated his question. Nedopiúskin raised his eyes in amazement, and opened his mouth. Rostisláff Adámitch narrowed his eyes venomously.

"I congratulate you, my dear sir, I congratulate you,"—he went on:—"truth to tell, not every one would have consented to earrrrn his daily bread in that manner; but *de gustibus non est disputandum,* that is to say, every one to his taste. . . . Is n't that so?"

Some one in the rear ranks gave a swift but decorous squeal of surprise and delight.

"Tell me,"—pursued Mr. Schtoppel, greatly encouraged by the smiles of the assembly:—"to which talent in particular are you indebted for your good fortune? No, be not ashamed, speak out; we are all of the family here, so to speak,

en famille. We are here *en famille,* are we not, gentlemen?"

The heir to whom Rostisláff Adámitch chanced to appeal with this question did not know French, unfortunately, and therefore confined himself to emitting a faint grunt of approval. On the other hand, another heir, a young man with yellowish blotches on his brow, made haste to put in: *"Voui, voui,* of course!"

"Perhaps,"—began Mr. Schtoppel again, "you can walk on your hands, with your feet elevated, so to speak, in the air?"

Nedopiúskin cast a sorrowful glance around him—all faces wore a spiteful smile, all eyes were covered with the moisture of satisfaction.

"Or, perchance, you can crow like a cock?"

A guffaw of laughter ran the round, and immediately ceased, quelled by expectation.

"Or, perchance, you can balance things on your nose. . . ."

"Stop!"—a sharp, loud voice suddenly interrupted Rostisláff Adámitch:—"aren't you ashamed to torment the poor man!"

All glanced round. At the door stood Tchertopkhánoff. In his quality of nephew thrice removed of the deceased distiller, he also had received a note of invitation to the family gathering. During the whole time of the reading, he—as always—had held himself haughtily apart from the rest.

"Stop!"—he repeated, throwing his head back arrogantly.

Mr. Schtoppel turned swiftly round, and, beholding a man poorly clad, not good-looking, he asked his neighbour in a low tone (caution is never amiss):

"Who is that?"

"Tchertopkhánoff, a person of no importance," the latter replied in his ear.

Rostisláff Adámitch assumed an arrogant mien.

"How came you to be commander?"—he said through his nose, puckering up his eyes.—"What sort of a bird are you, permit me to inquire?"

Tchertopkhánoff flared up, like powder at a spark. Rage stopped his breath.

"Dz-dz-dz-dz,"—he hissed, like a choking man, and suddenly thundered out:

"Who am I? who am I? I am Pantelél Tchertopkhánoff, a noble of ancient lineage,—my great-great-grandfather's grandfather served the Tzar,—but who art thou?"

Rostisláff Adámitch turned pale, and retreated a pace. He had not anticipated such resistance.

"I am a bird, I—I a bird!.... Oo..o!...."

Tchertopkhánoff darted forward; Schtoppel sprang aside in great perturbation, the guests flew at the irritated squire.

"Exchange shots, exchange shots this very moment, across a handkerchief!"—shouted the

thoroughly infuriated Panteléi:—" or thou must beg my pardon, and his . . . . . ."

" Beg his pardon, beg his pardon,"—murmured the startled heirs round about Schtoppel: " he 's a regular madman, you know,—quite ready to cut your throat."

" Excuse me, excuse me, I did not know,"—stammered Schtoppel:—" I did not know. . . . ."

" And do thou ask his pardon also! "—roared the irrepressible Panteléi.

" And do you pray excuse me also,"—added Rostisláff Adámitch, turning to Nedopiúskin, who was shaking as though with fever.

Tchertopkhánoff calmed down, went up to Tíkhon Iványitch, took him by the hand, cast a challenging glance around, and, without meeting any one's eye, left the room in triumph, accompanied by the new owner of the village of Bezselendyéevka.

From that day forth, they never parted company again. (The village of Bezselendyéevka was only eight versts distant from Bezsónovo.) Nedopiúskin's unbounded gratitude speedily passed into servile adoration. The weak, soft, not altogether clean Tíkhon bowed down in the dust before the fearless and disinterested Panteléi. " 'T is no small matter," he sometimes thought to himself:—" he talks with the Governor, he looks him straight in the eye. . . . Christ is my witness, —he looks him in the eye, that he does! "

He admired him to the point of perplexity, to

the enfeeblement of his mental powers; he regarded him as a remarkable, a wise, a learned man. And, truth to tell, bad as Tchertopkhánoff's education had been, still, in comparison with that of Tíkhon, it might be considered brilliant. Tchertopkhánoff, it is true, read little in Russian, understood French imperfectly,—so imperfectly that one day, in reply to the question of a Swiss tutor: *"Vous parlez français, Monsieur?"* he answered: *" je ne* understand," and after reflecting a while, he added: *" pas ";*—but, nevertheless, he remembered that there had existed in the world a very witty writer, Voltaire, and also that Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, had distinguished himself in the military line. Among Russian writers he respected Derzhávin, but loved Márlinsky, and named his best dog Ammalat-Beg. . . .

A few days after my first encounter with the two friends, I set off for the hamlet of Bezsónovo, to call upon Panteléi Eremyéitch. His tiny house was visible from afar; it reared itself up on a bare spot, half a verst from the village, " in an exposed site," as the saying is, like a hawk hovering over ploughed fields. Tchertopkhánoff's entire manor consisted of four ancient log edifices of various sizes, namely: a wing, a stable, a carriage-house, and a bath-house.[1]

[1] The bath-house is always separated from the house, and consists generally of an anteroom and the main chamber, with shelves of different heights. The steam is generated by throwing cold

Each log-house stood apart by itself: neither fence round about nor gate was visible. My coachman halted in perplexity at the half-rotten and choked-up well. Near the carriage-house, several gaunt and shaggy hare-hounds were tearing a dead horse,—probably Orbassán; one of them raised his bloody muzzle, gave a hurried yelp, and began again to gnaw at the bared ribs. Beside the horse stood a young fellow of seventeen, with a bloated and sallow face, dressed as a page, and with bare feet: he was pompously watching the dogs, which were entrusted to his oversight, and now and then he lashed the most greedy of them with a long whip.

"Is the master at home?"—I asked.

"Why, the Lord only knows!"—replied the young fellow.—"Knock."

I sprang out of my drozhky and walked to the porch of the wing.

The dwelling of Mr. Tchertopkhánoff presented a very sorry aspect: the beams had turned black, and protruded themselves forward "in a paunch," the chimney had tumbled down, the corners were ruined with dampness, and were tottering, the tiny, dim, dark-blue windows gazed forth with indescribable sourness from beneath the shaggy roof, which sagged forward: some aged street-walkers have eyes like that. I

water on stones heated to a glow when a bath is wanted. Peter the Great, in some of his baths, appropriately used cannon-balls.—TRANSLATOR.

knocked; no one responded. But I heard these words sharply uttered on the other side of the door:

"A, B, V;[1] come now, you fool,"—said a hoarse voice;—"A, B, V, G. . . . . Not that way! G, D, E, E! . . . . Come now, you fool!"

I knocked again.

The same voice shouted:—"Come in,—who 's there? . . . ."

I entered a bare little anteroom, and through the open door I descried Tchertopkhánoff himself. Clad in a dirty Bukhará dressing-gown and full trousers, with a red fez on his head, he was sitting at a table, gripping the muzzle of a young poodle with one hand, and with the other holding a bit of bread directly above his nose.

"Ah!"—he said with dignity, without stirring from his seat:—"I am very glad of your visit. Pray take a seat. I 'm bothering over Vénzor[2] here, as you see. . . . Tíkhon Ivánitch,"—he added, raising his voice:—"please come hither. A visitor has arrived."

"Immediately, immediately,"—replied Tíkhon Ivánitch from the adjoining room.—"Másha, give me my neckerchief."

Tchertopkhánoff again turned his attention to Vénzor, and laid the bit of bread on his nose. I

[1] The Russian alphabet runs in the order here indicated.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Probably intended for *Windsor*.—TRANSLATOR.

glanced about me. There was absolutely no furniture in the room, with the exception of a warped extension-table on thirteen legs of unequal length, and four dilapidated straw-seated chairs; the walls, which had been whitewashed long, long ago, with blue spots in the shape of stars, had peeled off in many places; between the windows hung a cracked and dimmed little mirror in a huge frame of imitation mahogany. In the corners stood Turkish pipes and guns; from the ceiling depended thick, black spiders' webs.

"A, B, V, G, D,"—enunciated Tchertopkhánoff slowly, then suddenly cried fiercely:—"E! E! E! . . . . What a stupid beast! . . . . E!"

But the ill-starred poodle only trembled, and could not make up his mind to open his mouth; he continued to sit there, with his tail painfully tucked between his legs, and, contorting his muzzle, blinked dejectedly and screwed up his eyes, as though he were saying to himself: "As you like, of course!"

"Come, eat, dost hear! Take!"—repeated the irrepressible squire.

"You have frightened him,"—I remarked.

"Well, then away with him!"

He gave him a kick. The poor animal rose quietly, dropped the bread from his nose, and went off, on tiptoe as it were, to the anteroom, deeply wounded. And, in fact, a strange man

had arrived for the first time, and that was the way he was being treated!

The door from the adjoining room creaked cautiously, and Mr. Nedopiúskin entered, amiably bowing and smiling.

I rose and made my bow.

"Don't disturb yourself, don't disturb yourself,"—he stammered.

We took our seats. Tchertopkhánoff withdrew into the next room.

"Have you been long in our parts?"—said Nedopiúskin in a soft voice, discreetly coughing behind his hand, and, out of a sense of propriety, keeping his fingers in front of his lips.

"This is the second month."

"Just so, sir."

We were silent for a while.

"We are having fine weather just now,"—went on Nedopiúskin, and looked at me with gratitude, as though the weather depended upon me:—"the grain is thriving wonderfully, one may say."

I inclined my head, in token of assent. Again we were silent for a space.

"Panteléi Eremyéitch ran down two grey hares yesterday,"—began Nedopiúskin again, with an effort, being obviously desirous of enlivening the conversation:—"Yes, sir, two extremely large grey hares."

"Has Mr. Tchertopkhánoff good dogs?"

"Very remarkable dogs, sir!"—returned Nedopiúskin, with pleasure:—"the best in the Government, I may say." (He moved up closer to me.) "But it 's a fact, sir! Panteléi Eremyéitch is that sort of a man! No sooner does he wish for a thing—no sooner does he take a thing into his head—the first you know, there it is accomplished, everything is fairly seething, sir. Panteléi Eremyéitch, I must tell you . . . ."

Tchertopkhánoff entered the room. Nedopiúskin grinned, fell silent, and indicated him to me with his eyes, as much as to say: "There, convince yourself." We began to chat about hunting.

"Would you like to have me show you my leash of hounds?"—Tchertopkhánoff asked me, and, without waiting for an answer, he called Karp.

There entered the room a robust young fellow in a nankeen kaftan green in hue with a sky-blue collar and livery buttons.

"Order Fómka,"—said Tchertopkhánoff abruptly:—"to fetch in Ammalat and Sáïga (Gazelle), and in proper order, dost understand?"

Karp grinned to the full extent of his mouth, emitted a vague sound, and left the room. Fomá made his appearance, with his hair brushed, his belt drawn tight, booted, and with the dogs. I, out of propriety, admired the stupid animals (all hare-hounds are extremely stupid). Tchertop-

khánoff spat straight into Ammalat's nostrils, which, however, apparently, did not afford the dog the slightest pleasure. Nedopiúskin caressed Ammalat from behind also. Again we began to chat. Tchertopkhánoff gradually grew thoroughly mild, and ceased to bear himself like a cock and to snort; the expression of his face underwent a change. He glanced at me and at Nedopiúskin.

"Eh!"—he suddenly exclaimed:—"Why should she sit there alone? Másha! hey there, Másha! come hither!"

Some one stirred in the adjoining room, but there was no reply.

"Má-a-asha,"—repeated Tchertopkhánoff caressingly:—"Come hither. There 's nothing wrong, have no fear."

The door opened softly, and I beheld a woman of twenty, tall and slender, with a swarthy gipsy face, yellowish-brown eyes, and hair as black as pitch; her large, white teeth fairly glittered from beneath her full red lips. She wore a white gown; a light blue shawl, fastened close around the throat with a golden pin, half covered her slender, high-bred hands.

"Here, let me commend her to your favour,"—said Panteléi Eremyéitch:—"she 's not exactly my wife, but the same as a wife."

Másha flushed slightly and smiled in confusion. I made her a very low bow. She pleased

me greatly. Her thin, aquiline nose, with its open, half-transparent nostrils, the bold line of her arching eyebrows, her pale, slightly sunken cheeks,—all the features of her face, expressed wayward passion and reckless daring. From beneath the coils of her hair, down upon her broad neck, ran two small tufts of shining little hairs—a token of good blood and of strength.

She walked to the window and sat down. I did not wish to heighten her confusion, and began to talk to Tchertopkhánoff. Másha turned her head slightly, and began to dart sidelong, stealthy, wild, swift glances at me. Her gaze flashed out like the sting of a serpent. Nedopiúskin sat down beside her and whispered something in her ear. She smiled again. When she smiled, she slightly wrinkled up her nose and elevated her upper lip, which imparted to her face an expression which was not exactly that of a cat, nor yet that of a lion. . . . .

"Oh yes, thou art a 'touch-me-not,'"—I thought, in my turn stealthily inspecting her willowy form, her sunken chest, and angular, agile movements.

"Well, now, Másha,"—asked Tchertopkhánoff:—"Must the visitor be treated to some sort of refreshments, hey?"

"We have some preserves,"—she replied.

"Well, fetch hither the preserves, and some

vódka too, by the way. And listen, Másha,"—he shouted after her:—" fetch thy guitar also."

" What 's the guitar for? I won't sing."

" Why not? "

" I don't feel like it."

" Eh, nonsense, thou wilt feel like it, if . . ."

" If what? "—asked Másha, swiftly contracting her brows.

" If thou art asked,"—Tchertopkhánoff completed his phrase, not without confusion.

" Ah! "

She left the room, speedily returned with the preserves and the vódka, and again seated herself by the window. The furrow was still visible on her forehead; both her eyebrows kept rising and falling, like the feelers of a wasp. . . . Have you observed, reader, what a vicious face the wasp has? " Well," I said to myself, " there 's going to be a thunderstorm." The conversation would not go. Nedopiúskin became absolutely dumb and smiled constrainedly; Tchertopkhánoff puffed, and flushed, and protruded his eyes; I was preparing to take my departure . . . . . when, suddenly, Másha rose to her feet, threw open the window with one movement, thrust out her head, and screamed angrily to a passing peasant-woman: " Aksínya! " The woman gave a start, tried to turn round, but slipped and fell heavily to the ground. Másha threw herself backward, and burst into a ringing laugh; Tcher-

topkhánoff also began to laugh; Nedopiúskin squealed with delight. We shook out our feathers. The thunderstorm had dissolved in one flash of lightning . . . . . the air had cleared.

Half an hour later, no one would have recognised us: we were chattering and frolicking like children. Másha was playing the maddest pranks of all, Tchertopkhánoff was fairly devouring her with his eyes. Her face had grown pale, her nostrils were dilated, her glance blazed and darkened at one and the same time. The savage was beginning to rise in her. Nedopiúskin waddled after her on his short, thick legs, like a drake after a duck. Even Vénzor crawled out from under the wall-bench in the anteroom, stood for a while on the threshold, gazed at us, and suddenly began to leap and bark. Másha fluttered out into the adjoining room, brought her guitar, flung the shawl from her shoulders, briskly took a seat, raised her head, and struck up a gipsy song. Her voice tinkled and quivered like a tiny cracked glass bell, it flared up and died away. . . . It produced a pleasing yet painful sensation in one's heart.—"Aï, burn away, spread out!" . . . Tchertopkhánoff began to dance. Másha writhed all over, like a piece of birch-bark in the fire; her slender fingers flew rapidly over the guitar, her swarthy neck heaved slowly under her necklace consisting of a double row of amber beads. Then, all of a sudden, she stopped short,

merely shrugged her shoulders, and fidgeted about on her seat, while Nedopiúskin wagged his head like a porcelain Chinaman;—then she began to warble again, like a madwoman, drawing up her figure and protruding her chest, and again Tchertopkhánoff began to squat down to the ground and leap up to the very ceiling,[1] spinning round like a peg-top and shouting: "Faster!" . . . .

"Faster, faster, faster, faster!"—chimed in Nedopiúskin, volubly.

Late at night I took my departure from Bezsónovo. . . .

[1] These are figures, so to speak, in the favourite Russian dance.—TRANSLATOR.

IX

THE END OF TCHERTOPKHÁNOFF

I

Two years after my visit, Panteléi Eremyéitch's calamities—precisely that, calamities — began. He had experienced unpleasantnesses, failures, and even misfortunes before that, but he had paid no attention to them, and had "reigned" as hitherto. The first calamity which overtook him was for him the most acute of all: Másha left him.

What it was that made her abandon his roof, to which, apparently, she had become so thoroughly accustomed, it would be difficult to say. Tchertopkhánoff, to the end of his days, cherished the conviction that the cause of Másha's treachery was a certain youthful neighbour, a retired captain of uhlans, nicknamed Yaff, who, according to Panteléi Eremyéitch's assertion, had fascinated her merely by incessantly twirling his moustache, using pomatum in excessive quantities, and smiling affectedly to a very decided degree; but we must assume, rather, that the roving gipsy blood which flowed in Másha's veins had asserted itself. At any rate, one fine summer

evening, Másha took herself off from Tchertopkhánoff's house, after having made up a small bundle of some rags of clothing.

For three days before that she had sat in a corner, bent double and huddling closely against the wall, like a wounded fox,—and not a word would she utter to any one, but merely rolled her eyes about, and mused, and twitched her brows, and displayed her teeth in a faint grin, and moved her hands about as though she were wrapping herself up. This "quiet fit" had come over her on previous occasions, but had never lasted long; Tchertopkhánoff was aware of this,—and consequently was not worried himself, neither did he worry her. But when, on his return from his kennels,—where, according to the statement of his whipper-in, his last two greyhounds were "moulting,"—he met a maid-servant, who in a trembling voice announced to him that Márya Akínfievna had ordered her to present her compliments to him, and to say that she wished him everything that was good, but would never return to him again—Tchertopkhánoff, after spinning round a couple of times on the spot where he stood and emitting a hoarse roar, immediately dashed off in pursuit of the fugitive, catching up his pistol by the way.

He overtook her a couple of versts from his house, beside a birch coppice, on the highway leading to the county town. The sun hung low

above the horizon, and everything round about—the trees, the grass, and the earth—suddenly turned crimson.

"To Yaff! to Yaff!"—moaned Tchertopkhánoff, as soon as he espied Másha:—"to Yaff!"—he repeated, as he rushed up to her, stumbling at almost every step.

Másha halted and turned her face toward him. She stood with her back to the light, and appeared completely black, as though carved out of dark wood. Only the whites of her eyes stood out like silver almonds, while the eyes themselves—the pupils—grew darker than ever.

She tossed her bundle aside, and folded her arms.

"She has set off for Yaff, the good-for-nothing hussy!"—repeated Tchertopkhánoff, attempting to seize her by the shoulder;—but the glance he encountered from her intimidated him, and made him stop short on the spot.

"I have not started for Mr. Yaff, Panteléi Eremyéitch,"—replied Másha in a quiet, even tone:—"only, I cannot live with you any longer."

"Why canst not thou live with me? Why so? Have I offended thee in any way?"

Másha shook her head.—"You have not offended me in any way, Panteléi Eremyéitch, only I have begun to languish at your house. . . . I thank you for the past, but stay I cannot—no!"

Tchertopkhánoff was dumfounded; he even smote his lips with his hands, and gave a leap.

"How so? Thou hast lived on and on, and hast experienced nothing but pleasure and tranquillity—and, all of a sudden, thou hast taken to pining! 'Herewith,' says she, 'I 'll abandon him!' She takes and throws a kerchief on her head—and off she goes. She has received every respect, just as much as a born lady. . . ."

"I could have dispensed with that, at least,"—interrupted Másha.

"Why couldst thou have dispensed with it? From a gipsy stroller, thou hast got into the station of a born lady—yes: thou didst not care for it? Why not, thou base-born miscreant? Is that credible? There 's treachery concealed here,—treachery!"

Again he began to foam at the mouth.

"There is no treachery whatever in my thoughts, and there has been none,"—said Másha in her drawling, distinct voice;—"but I have already told you: I was seized with a pining."

"Másha!"—cried Tchertopkhánoff, and smote his breast with his clenched fist:—"come, stop it, enough, thou hast tortured me . . . . come, enough of this. And by God! only think what Tísha will say; thou mightest, at least, have pity on him!"

"Give my regards to Tíkhon Ivánitch, and tell him . . ."

Tchertopkhánoff brandished his arms.—"But no, thou art lying—thou wilt not go away! Yaff shall wait for thee in vain!"

"Mr. Yaff—" Másha made an effort to say. . . .

"'*Mis-ter* Yaff,' forsooth,"—Tchertopkhánoff mimicked her.—"He 's a sly dog, if ever there was one, a swindler—and he has the phiz of an ape."

For full half an hour did Tchertopkhánoff contend with Másha. Now he stepped up close to her, again he sprang away, now he brandished his hands at her, again he made her reverences to her girdle, weeping and cursing. . . .

"I can't,"—Másha kept reiterating:—"I 'm so dejected. . . . I 'm tortured with boredom."

Little by little her face assumed such an indifferent, almost sleepy expression, that Tchertopkhánoff asked her whether she had been drugged with stramonium.

"'T is boredom,"—she said, for the tenth time.

"Well, now, what if I kill thee?"—he suddenly shouted, and pulled the pistol from his pocket.

Másha smiled; her face became animated.

"What then? Kill me, Panteléi Eremyéitch: as you please; but as for returning,—I simply won't do it."

"Thou wilt not return?"—Tchertopkhánoff cocked his pistol.

"I will not, my dear little dove. I won't return as long as I live. My word is firm."

Tchertopkhánoff suddenly thrust the pistol into her hand, and squatted down on the ground.

"Well, then do *thou* kill *me!* without thee I do not wish to live. I have become abhorrent to thee,—and everything has become abhorrent to me."

Másha bent down, picked up her bundle, threw the pistol on the grass, with the muzzle turned away from Tchertopkhánoff, and moved up close to him.

"Ekh, my dear little dove, why dost thou grieve without cause? Dost not thou know us gipsy women? 'T is our character, our custom. If the yearning for departure begins to breed, and summons the soul to distant, foreign parts,—why remain? Do thou remember thy Másha,—such another friend thou wilt never find,—and I shall not forget thee, my falcon;—but my life and thine together is at an end!"

"I have loved thee, Másha,"—murmured Tchertopkhánoff into his fingers, wherewith he had covered his face. . .

"And I have loved thee, dear friend, Panteléi Eremyéitch!"

"I have loved thee, I do love thee madly, unboundedly,—and when I think now that thou art abandoning me thus, for no cause, without rhyme or reason, and art setting out to wander about the

world,—well, then I begin to imagine that were I not an unhappy beggar, thou wouldst not have cast me off!"

Másha merely laughed at these words.

"Why, I was a penniless vagrant myself when thou didst take me in!"—she said, and gave Tchertopkhánoff a flourishing slap on the shoulder.

He sprang to his feet.

"Well, at least take some money from me,—how canst thou go off so, without a farthing? But best of all: kill me! I 'm talking sense to thee: kill me on the spot!"

Again Másha shook her head.—"Kill thee? But what are people sent to Siberia for, my dear little dove?"

Tchertopkhánoff shuddered.—"So 't is only for that, out of fear of the galleys, that thou wilt not." . . . . .

Again he fell prone on the grass.

Másha stood over him in silence.—"I 'm sorry for thee, Panteléi Eremyéitch,"—she said, with a sigh:—"thou art a good man . . . . . but there 's no help for it: farewell!"

She turned away, and took a couple of steps. Night had already begun to close in, and dim shadows were beginning to glide up from all quarters. Tchertopkhánoff rose briskly to his feet and grasped Másha by both elbows from behind.

"So thou art going, serpent? To Yaff!"

"Farewell!"—repeated Másha significantly and sharply, wrenched herself free, and walked away.

Tchertopkhánoff stared after her, ran to the spot where the pistol lay, seized it, took aim, and fired. . . . But before he pulled the trigger he threw his hand upward; the bullet whistled past over Másha's head. She darted a glance at him over her shoulder, without pausing,—and proceeded on her way, swaying her hips as she walked, as though to provoke him.

He covered his face—and set off on a run. . . .

But before he had run fifty paces, he came to a sudden halt, as though rooted to the spot. A familiar, a too-familiar voice reached his ears. Másha was singing. "Life young, life charming," —she sang; every sound seemed prolonged in the evening air—wailing and resonant. Tchertopkhánoff lent an ear. The voice retreated further and further; now it died away, again it floated to him in a barely audible, but still burning wave. . . .

"She 's doing that to irritate me," thought Tchertopkhánoff; but immediately added, with a groan: "Okh, no! she is taking leave of me forever;"—and burst into a flood of tears.

On the following day, he presented himself at the quarters of Mr. Yaff, who. like a true man of

the world, not liking the solitude of the country, had removed to the county town,—" nearer to the young ladies," as he expressed it. Tchertopkhánoff did not find Yaff; the latter, according to the statement of his valet, had set out for Moscow on the preceding day.

" Exactly so! "—exclaimed Tchertopkhánoff in a fury:—" it was a plot between them; she has eloped with him . . . . but wait a bit! "

He forced his way into the study of the young cavalry captain, despite the valet's opposition. In the study, over the divan, hung a portrait of the master of the house, in his uhlan uniform, painted in oils.—" Ah, there thou art, thou tailless ape! "—thundered Tchertopkhánoff, as he sprang upon the divan,—and smiting the tightly-stretched canvas with his fist, he broke a huge hole in it.

" Say to thy rascally master,"—he said, addressing the valet,—" that in default of his own disgusting phiz, nobleman Tchertopkhánoff has disfigured his painted phiz; and if he desires satisfaction from me, he knows where to find nobleman Tchertopkhánoff!—If he does not, I will find him! I 'll hunt out the dastardly ape at the bottom of the sea! "

As he uttered these words, Tchertopkhánoff sprang from the divan and withdrew in triumph.

But Captain Yaff did not demand any satisfaction from him,—he did not even encounter him

anywhere,—and Tchertopkhánoff did not dream of looking up his enemy, and no scandal resulted from this affair. Másha herself soon afterward disappeared without leaving a trace. Tchertopkhánoff would have liked to take to drink; he "saw the error of his ways," however. But at this point, a second calamity overtook him.

II

Namely: his bosom friend, Tíkhon Iványitch Nedopiúskin, expired. The latter's health had begun to fail two years previous to his death: he had begun to suffer from asthma, was incessantly falling asleep, and, on waking, he was slow in coming to himself: the county physician declared that he had had slight strokes of apoplexy. During the three days which preceded the departure of Másha,—those three days when she had been "pining,"—Nedopiúskin had been lying in bed at his own home in Bezselendyéevka: he had caught a heavy cold. The shock of Másha's behaviour was all the more unexpected to him: he was almost more deeply affected by it than even Tchertopkhánoff himself. Thanks to the gentleness and timidity of his character, he displayed no emotion, save tender sympathy for his friend, and pained surprise . . . . but everything within him broke and relaxed. "She has taken the soul out of me," he whispered to himself, as he sat on

his favourite little couch covered with oiled cloth, and twiddled his fingers. Even when Tchertopkhánoff recovered, he, Nedopiúskin, did not recover,—and continued to feel that "there was a void within him."—"Right here,"—he was wont to say, pointing to the centre of his breast, above the stomach. He dragged on thus until the winter. His asthma was relieved by the first cold weather, but on the other hand, he was visited not by a small shock of apoplexy, but by a real one. He did not immediately lose consciousness; he could still recognise Tchertopkhánoff, and even to his friend's despairing cry: "How comes it that thou, Tísha, art leaving me without my permission, just like Másha?" replied with faltering tongue:—"But, P . . . . a . . . . léi E . . . e . . . yéitch . . . I al . . . ays . . . . have . . . . mind . . . . ed . . . . you . . ." This did not prevent his dying the same day, however, before the arrival of the county physician, for whom, at the sight of his corpse, which was barely cold, there was nothing left to do except, with melancholy consciousness of the transitoriness of all things earthly, to request "a little vódka and dried sturgeon." Tíkhon Ivánitch had bequeathed his property, as might have been expected, to his "most respected benefactor, Panteléi Eremyéitch Tchertopkhánoff"; but it did not do his most respected benefactor much good, for it was speedily sold at public auction,—partly

in order to defray the expenses of a mortuary monument, a statue, which Tchertopkhánoff—(evidently, a characteristic of his father's was making itself felt!)—had taken it into his head to erect over the ashes of his friend. This statue, which was intended to represent an angel in prayer, he had ordered from Moscow; but the commissioner who had been recommended to him, taking into consideration the fact that expert judges of sculpture are rare in the rural districts, had sent him, instead of the angel, a statue of the goddess Flora, which for many years had adorned one of the neglected parks in the vicinity of Moscow of the Empress Katherine II's day;—as he, the agent, had obtained the said statue—which was an elegant one, in the rococo taste, with plump little hands, curling locks, and a garland of roses around its bare bosom and curved figure—for nothing. Consequently, to this day, the mythological goddess stands, with one foot gracefully uplifted, over the grave of Tíkhon Ivánitch, and, with a genuine Pompadour-like grimace, surveys the calves and sheep, those inevitable visitors of our cemeteries, which roam round about her.

III

After losing his faithful friend, Tchertopkhánoff again took to drink, and this time far more seriously. His affairs were completely on the

downward path. There was nothing left to hunt, his last slender resources were exhausted, his last wretched serfs had fled. A reign of absolute isolation set in for Panteléi Eremyéitch: there was not a soul with whom he could exchange a word, much less any one to whom he could unburden his mind. The only thing in him which was not diminished was his pride. On the contrary: the worse his circumstances became, the more arrogant and haughty and unapproachable did he become. At last, he grew thoroughly wild. One consolation, one joy, alone remained to him: a marvellous grey saddle-horse of Don breed, which he had named Malek-Adel, and was, really, a remarkable animal.

He had acquired the horse in the following manner:

As he was passing one day, on horseback, through a neighbouring village, Tchertopkhánoff heard an uproar among the peasants, and the shouting of a crowd around the dram-shop. In the centre of this crowd, robust arms kept incessantly rising and falling.

"What 's going on there?"—he inquired, in the imperious tone peculiar to him, of an old peasant-woman, who was standing on the threshold of her cottage.

Leaning against the lintel of the door, and seemingly in a doze, the woman was staring in the direction of the dram-shop. A tow-headed little

boy in a calico shirt, with a small cypress-wood cross on his bare breast,[1] was sitting, with his feet wide apart and his little fists clenched, between her plaited bast-slippers; in the same place a small chicken was pecking at a crust of rye bread as hard as wood.

"The Lord only knows, dear little father,"—replied the old woman,—and, bending forward, she laid her dark, wrinkled hand on the head of the little boy: "I 've heard say that our lads are beating a Jew."

"A Jew? What Jew?"

"The Lord knows, dear little father. Some Jew or other made his appearance among us; and whence he came—who knows? Vásya, my little gentleman, come to mamma: 'ssh, 'ssh, thou good-for-nothing!"

The woman frightened off the chicken, and Vásya clutched hold of her plaid petticoat of homespun.

"And so, sir, they 're thrashing him yonder."

"Thrashing him? What for?"

"Why, I don't know, dear little father. For cause, it must be. And how could they fail to thrash him? For he crucified Christ, dear little father!"

Tchertopkhánoff gave a view-halloo, lashed his

[1] The cross placed there during the baptismal ceremony by the priest and worn during life. The material of the cross varies, naturally, according to circumstances.—TRANSLATOR.

horse with his kazák whip on the neck, dashed headlong straight into the crowd, and, having penetrated it, began with the said whip to deal blows to right and left, without discrimination, on the peasants, crying as he did so, in a very abrupt voice:—"Ta . . . . king the law . . . . into your own hands! Ta . . . . . king the law . . . . into your own hands! The law ought to chastise—but the un . . . hap . . . . py peo . . . . ple! The law! The law! the la . . . . a . . . . aw! !"

Two minutes had not elapsed before the whole crowd had dispersed in various directions; and on the ground, in front of the dram-shop, there appeared a small, thin, swarthy-visaged being in a nankeen kaftan, dishevelled and mauled. . . . . The pallid face, the eyes rolled up, the mouth agape . . . . What was it? the swoon of terror, or death itself.

"Why have you killed the Jew?"—shouted Tchertopkhánoff loudly, as he brandished his whip menacingly.

The throng buzzed faintly in reply. One peasant was clutching his shoulder, another his side, a third his nose.

"'T was a hearty thrashing!" was heard from the rear ranks.

"With a kazák whip, too!" said another voice.

"Why have you killed the Jew? I ask you,

you damned Asiatics!"—repeated Tchertopkhánoff.

At this point, the being who was lying on the ground sprang alertly to his feet, and running after Tchertopkhánoff, convulsively grasped the edge of his saddle.

A hearty laugh thundered through the throng.

"He 's alive!" proceeded a voice once more from the rear ranks. "He 's just like a cat!"

"Defend me, save me, Your Vell-Born!"—the unhappy Jew stammered, the while pressing himself, with his whole breast, against Tchertopkhánoff's foot: "or they vill kill me, they vill kill me, Your Vell-Born!"

"What did they do that to you for?"—inquired Tchertopkhánoff.

"Vy, God ees my vitness, I cannot tell!—Zeir cattle begin to die . . . . and zey suspect me . . . . but, as God ees my vitness, I . . . ."

"Well, we 'll look into that later on!"—interrupted Tchertopkhánoff—"but now, do you lay hold of my saddle, and follow me.—And as for you!"—he added, turning to the crowd,—"you know me?—I 'm landed proprietor Panteléi Tchertopkhánoff, and I live in the village of Bezsónovo,—well, and that means that you can complain of me whenever you see fit,—and of the Jew also, by the way!"

"Why should we complain?"—said a stately, grey-bearded peasant, a perfect patriarch of the

olden days, in a low tone.—(He had not been worrying the Jew with the rest, by the way.)—"We know thy grace well, dear little father, Panteléi Eremyéitch; we are greatly indebted to thy grace for the lesson thou hast given us!"

"Why complain!"—joined in others:—"but we will have our will with that pagan! He shall not escape us!—We 'll hunt him like a hare in the fields. . ."

Tchertopkhánoff twitched his moustache, snorted, and rode off at a foot-pace to his own village, accompanied by the Jew whom he had rescued from his oppressors, as he had formerly rescued Tíkhon Ivánitch.

IV

A FEW days later, Tchertopkhánoff's sole remaining page announced to him that some man or other had arrived on horseback, and wished to speak to him. Tchertopkhánoff went out on the porch, and beheld his acquaintance the little Jew, mounted on a fine horse of the Don, which was standing motionless and proudly in the middle of the court-yard.—The Jew wore no cap—he was holding it under his arm; he had not put his feet into the stirrups themselves, but into the stirrup-straps; the tattered tails of his kaftan hung down on each side of the saddle. On catching sight of Tchertopkhánoff he began to make a smacking

noise with his lips and to twitch his elbows and jerk his legs about. But Tchertopkhánoff not only did not reply to his greeting, but even flew into a rage; he suddenly flared up all over: a scabby Jew had the audacity to sit on such a magnificent horse . . . . how indecent!

"Hey there, thou Ethiopian phiz!"—he shouted:—"dismount this instant, if thou dost not wish to be hauled off into the mud!"

The Jew immediately obeyed, tumbled in a heap out of the saddle like a sack, and holding the bridle with one hand, moved toward Tchertopkhánoff, smiling and bowing.

"What dost thou want?"—asked Panteléi Eremyéitch, with dignity.

"Your Vell-Born, please to look,—is n't dis a fine little horse?"—said the Jew, continuing to bow.

"H'm . . . . yes . . . . 't is a good horse. Where didst thou get it? Stole it, I suppose?"

"No, indeed I deed n't, Your Vell-Born!—I 'm an honest Jew, I deed n't steal it, but I got it for Your Vell-Born, really I deed! And vat trouble I have, vat trouble! And vat a horse eet ees! You can't find such anoder horse in all ze Don Proveence. See, Your Vell-Born, vat a horse eet ees! Blease to gome here! Whoa there . . . . . whoa . . . . . turn round, stand sideways!—And ve vill take off ze saddle.—Vat do you zink of heem, Your Vell-Born?"

" 'T is a good horse,"—repeated Tchertopkhánoff, with feigned indifference,—but his heart began fairly to thump in his breast. He was a passionate lover of " horse-flesh," and was a fine judge of it.

" But zhust inspect heem, Your Vell-Born! Stroke hees naick, hee, hee, hee! That 's right!"

Tchertopkhánoff, as though unwillingly, laid his hand on the horse's neck, administered a couple of pats, then ran his fingers down the animal's back, beginning with his forelock, and on reaching a certain place above the kidneys, he exerted a slight pressure on the spot, in expert fashion.—The steed instantly arched his back, and darting a sidelong glance round at Tchertopkhánoff from his haughty black eye, he snorted and shifted his forefeet.

The Jew burst out laughing, and clapped his hands softly.—" He recognises hees master, Your Vell-Born, hees master!"

" Come now, don't lie,"—interposed Tchertopkhánoff, testily.—" I have n't the means wherewith to buy this horse of thee . . . and I have never yet accepted a gift from the Lord God Himself, much less from a Jew!"

" And how zhould I dare to gif you anyzing, good gracious!"—exclaimed the Jew:—" Buy it, Your Vell-Born . . . . and as for ze money, I vait for heem."

Tchertopkhánoff reflected.

"What wilt thou take?"—he said at last, through his teeth.

The Jew shrugged his shoulders.

"Vat I pay myzelf—two hundred rubles."

The horse was worth double,—probably even thrice that sum.

Tchertopkhánoff turned away, and yawned feverishly.

"And when dost thou want the money?" he asked, contracting his brows with an effort, and without looking at the Jew.

"Venever Your Vell-Born likes."

Tchertopkhánoff threw back his head, but did not raise his eyes.—"That 's not an answer. Talk sense, thou Herod's race!—Am I to run into debt to thee, pray?"

"Vell, zen, let us zay zo,"—said the Jew hastily,—"in seex monts . . . . ees eet a bargain?"

Tchertopkhánoff made no reply.

The Jew tried to get a look at his eyes.—"Do you agree? Vill you order ze horse to be taken to ze stable?"

"I don't want the saddle,"—articulated Tchertopkhánoff, abruptly.—"Take off the saddle—dost hear me?"

"Zertainly, zertainly, I vill take eet, I vill take eet,"—stammered the delighted Jew, and threw the saddle over his shoulder.

"And the money,"—went on Tchertopkhánoff . . . . "is to be paid six months hence.—And not

two hundred rubles, but two hundred and fifty. Hold thy tongue! Two hundred and fifty, I tell thee! Follow me."

Tchertopkhánoff still could not bring himself to raise his eyes. Never had his pride suffered so. —" Obviously, 't is a gift,"—he said to himself: " this devil is offering it to me out of gratitude! " And he would have liked both to embrace the Jew and to murder him. . . .

" Your Vell-Born,"—began the Jew, gaining courage, and displaying his teeth in a grin:— " you ought, after ze Russian custom, to receive heem from ze coat-tail to ze coat-tail." . . . .

" Well, here 's a pretty thing thou hast taken into thy head!—A Jew . . . . and Russian custom!—Hey, who 's there? Take the horse, lead him to the stable.—And give him some oats. I 'll be there directly myself, and look him over. And understand: his name is Malek-Adel! "

Tchertopkhánoff started to ascend the porch-steps, but wheeled sharply round on his heels, and running up to the Jew, he shook him warmly by the hand.—The latter bent forward, and had already thrust out his lips—but Tchertopkhánoff sprang back and, saying in an undertone: " Don't tell anybody! " he disappeared through the door.

V

From that day forth, Malek-Adel became Tchertopkhánoff's chief business, his chief care, his

greatest joy in life. He came to love him as he had not loved even Másha, he became more attached to him than to Nedopiúskin.—And what a horse it was! Fire, regular fire, simply powder—and stately as a boyár!—Indefatigable, with great power of endurance, turn him whithersoever you would, he obeyed implicitly; and it cost nothing to feed him: if there was nothing else, he would eat the earth under his hoofs. When he went at a foot-pace, his rider felt as though he were being borne in arms; when he trotted,—as though he were being rocked on the surge of the sea; and when he galloped, the very wind could not overtake him. He never got blown, for his lungs were fine. His legs were of steel; and as for stumbling—there was never even a hint of such a thing! It was a mere nothing for him to leap over a ditch or a paling. And what a clever beast he was! He would run in answer to a call, tossing back his head; order him to stand still, and go away yourself—and he would not stir; as soon as you started to return, he would whinny almost inaudibly, as much as to say: "Here am I!"—And he was afraid of nothing: he would find his road in pitch-darkness, or in a blinding snow-storm; and he would not let a stranger touch him on any account whatsoever: he would bite him. And let no dog sneak about him: he would smite the dog instantly on the brow with his hoof, whack! and that was the last of the dog.—He was a spirited steed: you might flourish a whip

over him by way of display—but God preserve the person who should touch him with it! But what is the use of going into lengthy details?—He was a perfect treasure, not a horse!

When Tchertopkhánoff undertook to describe his Malek-Adel, he could not find words to do him justice. And how he caressed and petted him!—The creature's coat shone with the gleam of silver—and not of old, but of new silver, which has a dark gloss; pass your hand over it and it was like velvet! The saddle, the horse-cloth, the bit,—all his trappings were accurately adjusted, and burnished to such a degree that you might take a pencil and make sketches on them! Tchertopkhánoff—and what more can one say?—personally, with his own hands, plaited his pet's forelock, and washed its mane and tail with beer, and even anointed its hoofs with salve. . . .

He used to mount Malek-Adel and ride off—not to call on his neighbours,—for, as in the past, he had no intercourse with them,—but across their fields, past their manor-houses. . . . As much as to say: "Admire from a distance, you fools!" And if he heard that a hunt was on hand anywhere,—that a wealthy gentleman was preparing to set off for remote fields,—he immediately betook himself thither, and pranced about at a distance, on the horizon, astounding all beholders with the beauty and swiftness of his steed, but permitting no one to approach close to him.

On one occasion, a sportsman, accompanied by his whole suite, pursued him; perceiving that Tchertopkhánoff was escaping him, he began to shout at him at the top of his lungs, galloping at top-speed the while: "Hey, there! Listen! I 'll pay thee whatever thou askest for thy horse! I won't begrudge a thousand rubles! I 'll give my wife, my children! Take my last farthing!"

Tchertopkhánoff suddenly reined Malek-Adel up short. The sportsman dashed up to him.—"Dear little father!" he cried: "tell me, what wilt thou take? My own father!"

"If thou wert the Tzar,"—said Tchertopkhánoff, enunciating each word distinctly (and never in his life had he heard of Shakespeare),—"and if thou wert to give me thy whole kingdom for my horse,—I would n't accept it!"—So saying, he gave a guffaw, made Malek-Adel rear up on his hind legs, wheeled him round in the air, on his hind legs alone, just as though the animal had been a peg-top or a teetotum,—and off he flew! He fairly flashed in sparks over the stubble-field. And the sportsman (they say that he was a very wealthy prince) "dashed his cap on the ground," —and then flung himself, face down, on his cap! And there he lay for the space of half an hour.

And how could Tchertopkhánoff fail to prize his horse? Was it not thanks to him that he again became superior to all his neighbours—indubitably, definitively superior to all his neighbours?

VI

In the meanwhile, time passed, the term for payment drew near—and Tchertopkhánoff had not fifty rubles, much less two hundred and fifty. What was to be done, how was the situation to be redeemed?—"Never mind,"—he decided at last, "if the Jew will not show mercy, if he will not wait a little longer,—I 'll hand over to him my house and my land,—and I myself will ride off on the horse in some direction, at random! I 'll perish with hunger,—but Malek-Adel I will not surrender!" He became greatly agitated, and even grew pensive; but at this point Fate—for the first and last time—showed pity on him, smiled on him: some distant aunt, whose very name Tchertopkhánoff did not know, left him in her will what was a huge sum in his eyes—two thousand rubles!—And he received this money just in time, so to speak: the day before the Jew's arrival. Tchertopkhánoff nearly went out of his senses for joy—but the thought of vódka did not enter his head: he had not taken a drop into his mouth since the day Malek-Adel had come to him. He hastened to the stable, and kissed his friend on both sides of his muzzle above the nostrils, in the spot where a horse's skin is so soft.—"Now we shall not be parted!"—he cried, patting Malek-Adel's neck, beneath the well-combed mane. On

his return to the house, he counted out and sealed up in a packet two hundred and fifty rubles. Then he mused, as he lay on his back and smoked his pipe, as to how he should dispose of the remaining money—in fact, as to what sort of hounds he should get,—genuine Kostromá hounds, and they must, without fail, be the red-spotted variety! He even had a chat with Perfíshka, to whom he promised a new kazák coat with yellow galloon on all the seams—and went to bed in the most blissful mood possible.

He had a bad dream: he thought he had ridden out to a hunt; only, not on Malek-Adel, but on some strange animal, in the nature of a camel; a white fox, white as snow, came running to meet him. . . . He tried to swing his whip, he tried to set the dogs on it—but in his hand, instead of a whip he found a wisp of bast,[1] and the fox kept trotting on in front of him, and sticking out its tongue at him in mockery. He sprang from his camel, stumbled, fell . . . . and fell straight into the arms of a gendarme, who summoned him to the Governor-General, in whom he recognised Yaff. . . .

Tchertopkhánoff awoke. The room was dark; the cocks had just crowed for the second time. . . .

Somewhere, far, far away, a horse was neighing.

[1] Bunches of shredded bast from the inner bark of the linden tree form the favorite bath-sponges.—TRANSLATOR.

Tchertopkhánoff raised his head. . . . . Again a faint, faint neighing was audible.

"That 's Malek-Adel neighing!"—he said to himself. . . . . "That 's his neigh! But why is it so far away? Good heavens! . . . It cannot be . . . ."

All at once, Tchertopkhánoff turned cold all over, leaped from his bed on the instant, found his boots, his clothing, by groping, dressed himself, and, snatching the key to the stable from beneath his pillow, he rushed out into the court-yard.

VII

The stable was situated at the very end of the yard; one of its walls abutted on the open fields. Tchertopkhánoff did not immediately insert the key into the lock—his hands were trembling—and did not immediately turn the key. . . . He stood motionless, holding his breath, to see if anything were stirring behind the door. "Máleshka! Máletz!" he called in an undertone: deathly silence! Tchertopkhánoff involuntarily pulled out the key: the door creaked on its hinges, and opened. . . . That meant, that the door had not been locked. He stepped across the threshold and again called his horse—this time by his full name: "Malek-Adel!" But his faithful comrade did not respond, only a mouse rustled in the straw. Then Tchertopkhánoff flung himself into that

one of three stalls in which Malek-Adel had been lodged. He went straight to that stall, although such darkness reigned all around that it was impossible to see a hand's-breadth in front of one. . . . It was empty! Tchertopkhánoff's head reeled; a bell seemed to be booming under his skull. He tried to say something—but merely hissed, and groping with his hands above, below, on all sides, panting, with knees bending under him, he made his way from one stall to the second . . . . to the third, which was filled with hay almost to the top, hit against one wall, then the other, fell, rolled heels over head, rose to his feet, and suddenly rushed headlong through the half-open door into the court-yard. . . .

" They have stolen him! Perfíshka! Perfíshka! They have stolen him! "—he roared, at the top of his lungs.

Perfíshka the page flew out of the garret in which he slept, topsy-turvy, clad in nothing but his shirt. . . .

The two crashed together like drunken men—the gentleman and his solitary servant—in the middle of the yard; they spun round like madmen in front of each other. The gentleman could not explain what the matter was; neither could the servant comprehend what was wanted of him.—" Alas! alas! "—stammered Tchertopkhánoff.—" Alas! alas! " the page repeated after him.—" A lantern! give me the lantern, light the lantern! A

light! A light!" burst forth, at last, from Tchertopkhánoff's exhausted breast. Perfíshka flew to the house.

But it was no easy matter to light the lantern, or to get a light: sulphur matches were considered a rarity in Russia at that epoch; the last embers in the kitchen had long since died out; flint and steel were not speedily to be found, and worked badly. Gnashing his teeth, Tchertopkhánoff snatched them from the hands of the panic-stricken Perfíshka, and began to strike a light himself; sparks showered forth in abundance, oaths and even groans showered forth in still greater abundance—but the tinder either did not take fire at all, or went out, despite the strenuous efforts of four inflated cheeks and lips! At last, at the end of five minutes, no sooner, the morsel of tallow candle was burning in the bottom of the broken lantern, and Tchertopkhánoff, accompanied by Perfíshka, precipitated himself into the stable, elevated the lantern above his head, looked about him. . . . . Completely empty!

He rushed out into the yard, traversed it in all directions at a run—the horse was nowhere to be found! The wattled fence surrounding Pantélei Eremyéitch's manor had long since fallen to decay, and in many places it was bent over and hanging close to the ground. . . . Alongside the stable it had tumbled down completely for a

space more than two feet in width. Perfíshka pointed out this place to Tchertopkhánoff.

"Master! look here: this was not so to-day. Yonder, the posts are sticking out of the ground, too; some one must have pulled them out."

Tchertopkhánoff dashed up with his lantern, passed it along the ground. . . .

"Hoofs, hoofs, the prints of a horse's shoes, prints, fresh prints!"—he muttered rapidly.—"Here is where they led him through, here, here!"

He instantly leaped over the hedge, and with the cry: "Malek-Adel! Malek-Adel!" he ran straight off across the fields.

Perfíshka remained standing in bewilderment by the wattled fence. The bright circle cast by the lantern speedily vanished from his eyes, swallowed up by the thick darkness of the starless and moonless night.

Tchertopkhánoff's despairing cries resounded with ever-increasing faintness. . . .

VIII

Day was dawning when he returned home. He no longer bore the semblance of a man: his entire clothing was covered with mud, his face had assumed a strange and savage aspect, his eyes had a morose and stupid look. In a hoarse whisper he drove Perfíshka away from him, and locked

himself up in his own room. He could scarcely stand, so exhausted was he,—yet he did not go to bed, but sat down on a chair near the door, and clasped his head in his hands.

"They have stolen him! . . . . . stolen him!"

But how had the thief contrived to steal Malek-Adel by night from the fast-locked stable? Malek-Adel, who by day would not allow a stranger to come near him—to steal him without noise, without a sound? And how is it to be explained that not a single yard-dog barked? To tell the truth, there were only two of them, two young puppies, and even they had buried themselves in the ground, with cold and hunger—but notwithstanding. . . .

"And what am I to do now without Malek-Adel?" thought Tchertopkhánoff. "I have now been deprived of my last joy—it is time for me to die. Shall I buy another horse, seeing that I am now provided with money? But where am I to find another horse like that?"

"Panteléi Eremyéitch! Panteléi Eremyéitch!" —a timid call made itself audible outside the door.

Tchertopkhánoff sprang to his feet.

"Who is it?"—he shouted in an unnatural voice.

"'T is I, your page, Perfíshka."

"What dost thou want? Has he been found, has he run home?"

"Not at all, sir, Panteléi Eremyéitch; but that little Jew who sold him . . . ."

"Well?"

"He has arrived."

"Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!"—Tchertopkhánoff guffawed with laughter,—and flung the door open with a bang.—"Drag him hither, drag him, drag him!"

At the sight of the savage, disordered figure of his "benefactor," which thus suddenly presented itself, the Jew, who was standing behind Perfíshka, made an attempt to take to his heels; but Tchertopkhánoff overtook him in two bounds, and seized him by the throat like a tiger.

"Ah! thou hast come for thy money! for thy money!"—he yelled hoarsely, as though *he* were being strangled, instead of *himself* doing the strangling; "thou hast stolen him by night, and by day hast come for thy money? Hey? Hey?"

"Have mercy, Yo . . ur Ve-ell-Bo-orn!" groaned the Jew.

"Tell me, where is my horse? What hast thou done with him? To whom hast thou disposed of him? Tell me, tell me, tell me!"

The Jew could no longer groan; even the expression of terror had vanished from his face, which had turned blue. His hands dropped and swung limply; his whole body, vehemently shaken by Tchertopkhánoff, swayed back and forth like a reed.

"I 'll pay thee thy money, I 'll pay thee thy money in full, to the uttermost kopék,"—yelled Tchertopkhánoff—"only I 'll strangle thee, like the meanest of chickens, if thou dost not instantly tell me. . . ."

"But you have strangled him, master,"—remarked the page Perfíshka submissively.

Only then did Tchertopkhánoff come to his senses.

He relinquished his hold on the Jew's throat; the latter fell in a heap on the floor. Tchertopkhánoff picked him up, seated him on a bench, poured a glass of vódka down his throat—and restored him to consciousness. And having restored him to consciousness, he entered into conversation with him.

It appeared that the Jew had not the slightest comprehension as to the theft of Malek-Adel. And why should he steal the horse which he himself had obtained for "his most respected Panteléi Eremyéitch"?

Then Tchertopkhánoff led him to the stable.

Together they inspected the stall, the manger, the lock on the door; they rummaged in the hay, the straw, and then went into the yard; Tchertopkhánoff pointed out to the Jew the imprints of hoofs beside the wattled fence—and all at once smote himself on the thigh.

"Stop!"—he cried.—"Where didst thou buy the horse?"

" In Maloarkhángel district, at the Verkhosénskoe horse-fair,"—replied the Jew.

" From whom? "

" From a kazák."

" Stay! Was that kazák a young man or an old one? "

" A sedate man, of middle age."

" And what was he like? How did he look? A sly rascal, I suppose."

" He must have been a rascal, Your Vell-Born."

" And what did that rascal say to you,—had he owned the horse long? "

" I remember that he said he had."

" Well, then, no one but himself could have stolen it! Judge for thyself, listen, stand here . . . . what 's thy name? "

The Jew gave a start, and turned his little black eyes on Tchertopkhánoff.

" What is *my* name? "

" Well, yes; what art thou called? "

" Moshel Leiba."

" Well, judge for thyself, Leiba, my friend,—thou art a clever man,—into whose hands, save those of his former master, would Malek-Adel have surrendered himself? For he saddled him, and bridled him, and took his blanket off him—yonder it lies on the hay! . . . . . He simply behaved as though he were at home! Malek-Adel would certainly have crushed under his hoofs any

one who was not his master! He would have raised such an uproar that he would have thoroughly alarmed the whole village! Dost thou agree with me?"

"I do, I do, Your Vell-Born. . . ."

"Well, then, first of all, we must find that kazák!"

"But how are ve to find him, Your Vell-Born? I have never seen him except vun little time—and vere ees he now—and vat is hees name? Aï, vaï, vaï!"—added the Jew, dolefully shaking his earlocks.

"Leiba!"—shouted Tchertopkhánoff suddenly,—"Leiba, look at me! I have lost my mind, I am not myself! . . . . I shall lay violent hands on myself, if thou wilt not help me!"

"But how can I? . . ."

"Come with me—and we will find that thief!"

"But vere zhall ve go?"

"Among the fairs, on the big highways, on the little highways, to the horse-thieves, the towns, the villages, the farms—everywhere, everywhere! And as for money, thou needst not worry: I have received an inheritance, brother! I 'll squander the last kopék—but I 'll get my friend. And the kazák, that villain, shall not escape us! Whithersoever he goes, thither will we go also! If he is under the earth—we, too, will go under the earth! If he goes to the devil—we 'll go to Satan too!"

"Vell, but vy to Zatan?"—remarked the Jew, —"ve can get along vizout heem."

"Leiba!" — interposed Tchertopkhánoff, — "Leiba, although thou art a Jew, and thy faith is accursed—yet thou hast a soul better than that of many a Christian! Thou hast taken pity on me! there is no use in my setting off alone, I cannot deal with this affair alone. I am hot-headed—but thou hast a good head, a head of gold! That 's the way with thy race: it has attained to everything without science! Perhaps thou hast thy doubts, and sayest to thyself: 'Whence has he the money?' Come into my room with me—I 'll show thee all the money. Take it, take my cross, from my neck—only give me Malek-Adel, give him to me, give him to me!"

Tchertopkhánoff shook as though in fever: the perspiration poured down his face in streams, and mingling with his tears, became lost in his moustache. He pressed Leiba's hands, he entreated him, he almost kissed him. . . He had got into a transport. The Jew tried to reply, to convince him that it was impossible for him to absent himself from his business. . . . . In vain! Tchertopkhánoff would not listen to anything. There was no help for it: poor Leiba was forced to consent.

On the following day, Tchertopkhánoff, accompanied by Leiba, drove away from Bezsónovo in a peasant-cart. The Jew wore a somewhat disconcerted aspect, clung to the rail with one hand,

and his whole wizened body jolted about on the quaking seat; the other hand he pressed to his breast, where lay a package of bank-notes, wrapped up in a bit of newspaper. Tchertopkhánoff sat like a statue, merely turned his eyes about him, and took the air into his lungs in deep breaths; a dagger projected from his belt.

"Look out for thyself now, thou villain-separator!" he muttered, as they emerged upon the highway.

He had entrusted his house to Perfíshka, the page, and to the peasant who acted as his cook, a deaf old woman, whom he had taken under his protection out of compassion.

"I shall return to you on Malek-Adel,"—he shouted to them in farewell,—"or I shall not return at all!"

"Thou mightest, at least, marry me, I think!" —jested Perfíshka, nudging the old woman in the ribs with his elbow.—"Anyhow,—we shall never see the master again, and otherwise, thou wilt certainly expire with tedium!"

IX

A YEAR passed . . . . . a whole year: no news arrived of Panteléi Eremyéitch. The old woman died; Perfíshka himself was preparing to abandon the house and betake himself to the town, whither he was being lured by his cousin, who was

living there as assistant to a hair-dresser,—when, suddenly, a rumour became current that the master was coming back! The deacon of the parish had received a letter from Panteléi Eremyéitch himself, in which the latter informed him of his intention to come to Bezsónovo, and requested him to notify his servants, in order that the proper reception might be made ready. These words Perfíshka understood in the sense that he must wipe off a little of the dust; he had not much faith in the accuracy of the news, however; but he was forced to the conviction that the deacon had told the truth when, a few days later, Panteléi Eremyéitch himself, in person, made his appearance in the court-yard of the manor-house, mounted on Malek-Adel.

Perfíshka rushed to his master, and, holding his stirrup, attempted to assist him in alighting from his horse; but the latter sprang off unaided, swept a triumphant glance around him, and exclaimed in a loud voice: " I said that I would find Malek-Adel, and I have found him, to the discomfiture of my enemies and of Fate itself! " Perfíshka advanced to kiss his hand, but Tchertopkhánoff paid no heed to his servant's zeal. Leading Malek-Adel after him by the bridle he wended his way with long strides to the stable. Perfíshka scrutinised his master with more attention—and quailed:—" Okh, how thin and old he has grown in the course of the year—and how stern and grim

his face has become!" Yet it would have seemed fitting that Panteléi Eremyéitch should rejoice, in view of the fact that he had accomplished his object; and he did rejoice, as a matter of fact .... and, nevertheless, Perfíshka quailed and even felt afraid. Tchertopkhánoff placed the horse in his former stall, slapped him gently on the crupper, and said: "Now, then, thou art at home again! Look out! . . . ." On that same day he hired a trustworthy watchman, an untaxable, landless peasant, established himself once more in his own rooms, and began to live as of yore. . . .

But not altogether as of yore. . . . . Of this, however, later on.

On the day following his return, Panteléi Eremyéitch summoned Perfíshka to his presence, and, in the absence of any other companion, began to narrate to him—without losing the sense of his own dignity, of course, and in a bass voice—in what manner he had succeeded in finding Malek-Adel. While the story was in progress, Tchertopkhánoff sat with his face to the window, smoking the pipe of a long Turkish tchibúk, while Perfíshka stood on the threshold of the door, with his hands clasped behind him, and gazing respectfully at the back of his master's head, listened to the story of how, after many fruitless efforts and peregrinations, Panteléi Eremyéitch had, at last, arrived at the fair in Rómny, alone, without the Jew Leiba, who, through weakness of character,

had not held out and had deserted him; how, on the fifth day, when he was already on the point of departing, he had passed, for the last time, along the rows of carts, and had suddenly espied, among three other horses hitched to the canvas feed-trough—had espied Malek-Adel! How he had recognised him on the instant,—and how Malek-Adel had also recognised him, had begun to whinny and paw the earth with his hoof.—" And he was not with the kazák,"—pursued Tchertopkhánoff, still without turning his head, and in the same bass voice as before,—" but with a gipsy horse-dealer; naturally, I immediately seized on my horse, and tried to recover it by force; but the beast of a gipsy set up a howl, as though he were being scalded, and began to swear, in the hearing of the whole market-place, that he had bought the horse from another gipsy, and wanted to produce his witnesses. . . . I spat—and paid him money: devil take him! For me the chief thing, the precious thing, was that I had found my friend, and had recovered my spiritual peace. But, seest thou, I had grabbed a kazák, as the Jew Leiba put it, in the Karatchévoe district,—I had taken him for my thief,—and had smashed in his whole ugly phiz; but the kazák turned out to be the son of a priest, and was infamous enough to wring one hundred and twenty rubles from me. Well, money is a thing that can be acquired; but the principal point is, that Malek-Adel is with me

once more! Now I am happy—I shall enjoy tranquillity. And here are thy instructions, Porfíry: just as soon as thou shalt behold a kazák in the neighbourhood—which God forbid!—run and fetch me my gun that very second, without uttering one word, and I shall know how to act!"

Thus spake Panteléi Eremyéitch Tchertopkhánoff; this was what his lips expressed; but he was not so tranquil at heart as he asserted.

Alas! in the depths of his soul he was not fully convinced that the horse he had brought home was really Malek-Adel.

X

A DIFFICULT time began for Panteléi Eremyéitch. Tranquillity was precisely the thing which he enjoyed least of all. Good days did come, it is true: the doubt which had assailed him seemed to him nonsense, he thrust from him the awkward thought as he would an importunate fly, and even laughed at himself; but he had his bad days also: the persistent thought began again to prey stealthily on his heart and to gnaw at it, like a mouse under the floor,—and he tormented himself keenly, and in secret. In the course of that memorable day on which he had found Malek-Adel, Tchertopkhánoff had felt only blissful joy . . . . but on the following morning, when, under the low penthouse of the posting-station, he began to saddle his treasure-trove, close to which he had

passed the night—something stung him for the first time. . . . He merely shook his head—but the seed was sown. In the course of his homeward journey (it lasted for about a week), doubts awoke rarely within him: they became more powerful and distinct as soon as he had reached his Bezsónovo, as soon as he found himself in the place where the former, the indubitable Malek-Adel had dwelt. . . . On the road he had ridden mainly at a foot-pace, at a jog-trot, gazing about him on all sides, had smoked his tobacco from a short pipe, and had indulged in no meditations, unless it were to say to himself, "Whatever the Tchertopkhánoffs want, that they get!" and grin; but when he got home, it was quite a different matter. All this, of course, he kept to himself: his pride alone forbade his displaying his inward trepidation. He would have "rent asunder" any one who had even distantly hinted that Malek-Adel did not appear to be the former horse; he accepted congratulations on his "lucky find" from the few persons with whom he chanced to come in contact; but he did not seek these congratulations, and avoided intercourse with people more assiduously than ever—which is a bad sign! He was almost constantly putting Malek-Adel through his examination, if one may so express it; he would ride off on him to some extremely distant spot in the fields, and put him to the test; or he would creep stealthily into the

stable, lock the door behind him, and, placing the horse's head before him, would gaze into his eyes, asking in a whisper: "Art thou he? Art thou he? Art thou he? . . . ." or he would stare at him in silence, and so intently, for whole hours at a stretch, now rejoicing and muttering: "Yes! 'T is he! Of course, 't is he!"—again perplexed and disconcerted.

And Tchertopkhánoff was perturbed not so much by the physical dissimilarity between *that* Malek-Adel and *this* one—it was not so very great: that one's mane and tail seemed to have been thinner, his ears more pointed, his cannon-bones shorter, and his eyes brighter,—moreover, that might only seem to be the case; but what troubled Tchertopkhánoff was, so to speak, the moral dissimilarity. *That* one had different habits, his whole moral nature was unlike. For example: *that* Malek-Adel had been wont to glance round and whinny slightly every time Tchertopkhánoff entered the stable; but *this* one went on munching his hay, as though nothing were happening—or dozed with drooping head. Neither of them stirred from the spot when their master sprang from the saddle; but *that* one, when he was called, immediately advanced toward the voice,—while *this* one continued to stand stock-still. *That* one galloped with equal swiftness, but jumped higher and further; *this* one had a more undulating gait when walking, but jolted

more on a trot, and sometimes interfered with his shoes—that is to say, struck the hind shoe against the fore shoe; *that* one never had such a disgraceful trick—God forbid! *This* one, so it seemed to Tchertopkhánoff, was forever twisting his ears, —while with the *other* the contrary was the case: he would lay one ear back, and keep it so,—watching his master! *That* one, as soon as he saw that there was dirt around him, would immediately tap on the wall of his stall with his hind foot; but *this* one did not mind if the manure accumulated up to his very belly. *That* one, if he were placed head on to the wind, for example,—would immediately begin to inhale with all his lungs, and shake himself, but *this* one would simply snort; *that* one was disturbed by dampness foreboding rain—*this* one cared nothing for it. . . . *This* one was coarser, coarser! And *this* one had no charm, as *that* one had, and was hard-mouthed—there was no denying it! The other was a pleasing horse—while *this* one . . . .

This was the way things sometimes seemed to Tchertopkhánoff, and these reflections bred bitterness in him. On the other hand, there were times when he would launch his steed at full gallop over some unploughed field or make him leap to the very bottom of a ravine washed out by the rains and leap back again straight up the steep, and his heart would swoon within him for rapture, a thunderous halloo would burst from

his lips, and he knew for a certainty that he had under him the genuine, indubitable Malek-Adel, for what other horse was capable of doing what this one did?

But even so, errors and calamities were not lacking. The prolonged search for Malek-Adel had cost Tchertopkhánoff a great deal of money: he no longer dreamed of the Kostromá hounds, and rode about the country-side in solitude, as of yore. And lo, one morning, about five versts from Bezsónovo, Tchertopkhánoff ran across that same princely hunting-train before which he had pranced in so dashing a manner a year and a half before. And this incident must needs happen: precisely as on that other day, so now, a grey hare leaped out in front of the hounds from under the hedge on the slope of a hill!

"Tallyho! tallyho!"—The whole hunt fairly dashed onward, and Tchertopkhánoff dashed on also—only not with them, but a couple of hundred paces to one side of them—precisely as on the former occasion. A tremendous gully intersected the declivity on a slant, and, rising higher and higher, gradually contracted, intercepting Tchertopkhánoff's road. At the point where he was obliged to leap it—and where he actually had leaped it eighteen months previously—it was still eight paces in width, and a couple of fathoms in depth. In anticipation of a triumph,—of a triumph so miraculously re-

peated,—Tchertopkhánoff began to cackle victoriously, brandishing his kazák whip; the huntsmen galloped on, never taking their eyes from the bold horseman,—his horse was flying forward like an arrow,—and now, the gully is right in front of his nose! Come, come, at a bound, as before! . . . .

But Malek-Adel balked abruptly, wheeled to the left, and galloped along the brink, jerk his head to the side as Tchertopkhánoff might, in the direction of the gully. . . .

The fact was, he had turned cowardly, he had no confidence in himself!

Then Tchertopkhánoff, all glowing with shame and wrath, almost in tears, dropped the reins and urged the horse straight ahead, up-hill, away, away from those sportsmen, if only that he might avoid hearing how they jeered at him, if only that he might escape as speedily as possible from their accursed eyes!

With flanks covered with stripes, all bathed in foam, Malek-Adel galloped home, and Tchertopkhánoff immediately locked himself up in his own room.

"No, it is not he, it is not my friend! That one would have broken his neck,—but he would not have betrayed me!"

XI

The following incident definitively "finished" Tchertopkhánoff, as the saying is. Mounted on

Malek-Adel, he was one day making his way through the back-yards of the ecclesiastical settlement surrounding the church to whose parish the hamlet of Bezsónovo pertained. With his kazák cap pulled well down over his eyes, bending forward, and with both hands resting on the saddle-bow, he was slowly advancing; everything was cheerless and perturbed in his soul. All at once, some one called him by name.

He drew up his horse, raised his head, and beheld his correspondent the deacon. With a dark-brown three-cornered hat on his dark-brown locks plaited in a small pig-tail, arrayed in a kaftan of yellowish nankeen girt considerably lower than the waist with a fragment of sky-blue stuff, the servitor of the altar had come out to visit his "little granary," and, catching sight of Panteléi Eremyéitch, considered it his duty to express his respects to him,—and, incidentally, to get something out of him. It is a well-understood fact that ecclesiastical persons never enter into conversation with laymen without some ulterior motive of that sort.

But Tchertopkhánoff was in no mood to attend to the deacon; he barely returned his salutation, and, grumbling something through his teeth, he was already flourishing his kazák whip.

"But what a superb horse you have!"—the deacon hastened to add:—"really, you may congratulate yourself on it. Of a truth, you are

a man of wonderful mind; simply, like unto a lion!"—The deacon was renowned for his eloquence—which greatly vexed the father-priest, whom Fate had not endowed with the gift of words: even vódka did not loosen his tongue.—"You have been deprived of one animal, through the machinations of evil-doers,"—went on the deacon,—"and, not in the least discouraged, but, on the contrary, relying still more firmly on Divine Providence, you have procured for yourself another quite as good, and even better, I think . . . . . for . . . ."

"What nonsense art thou prating?"—broke in Tchertopkhánoff angrily: "What dost thou mean by another horse? This is the identical one: this is Malek-Adel. . . . I hunted him up. Thou art babbling at random. . . ."

"Eh! eh! eh! eh!"—ejaculated the deacon, with pauses between, and as though prolonging his words, running his fingers through his beard, and surveying Tchertopkhánoff with his bright, greedy eyes.—"What do you mean by that, sir? Your horse was stolen, if God gives me memory, a couple of weeks after the Feast of the Intercession [1] last year, and now we are at the end of November."

"Well, then, and what of that?"

The deacon still continued to play with his beard.—"It means that more than a year has

[1] October 1, O. S.; 14, N. S.—TRANSLATOR.

elapsed since that time, and your horse was then a dappled grey as he is now; he has even grown darker. How about that? Grey horses turn very white in one year."

Tchertopkhánoff shuddered . . . . it was just as though some one had pricked his heart with a spear. And, in fact, grey horses do change colour! How was it that so simple a thought had not entered his head up to that moment?

"Thou damned pig-tail![1] Get out!"—he yelled suddenly, his eyes flashing with fury—and instantly vanished from the sight of the astounded deacon.

Well! All was at an end!

Everything was really at an end now, everything had burst, the last card was trumped! Everything had crashed into ruin at that one phrase: "They turn white!"

Grey horses turn white!

Gallop, gallop, thou accursed one! Thou canst not gallop away from that word!

Tchertopkhánoff dashed home, and again locked himself up.

XII

That this wretched nag was not Malek-Adel; that not the slightest likeness existed between him and Malek-Adel; that any man who had the least

[1] Ecclesiastics in Russia all wear their hair long, and, as described in this story, often braid it to keep it out of the way, in private life. —Translator.

sense must have perceived this at the very first glance; that he, Panteléi Tchertopkhánoff, had deceived himself in the most vulgar manner—no! That he had deliberately, with premeditation cheated himself, had lowered that haze over himself—there now remained not the faintest doubt! Tchertopkhánoff paced back and forth in his room, wheeling on his heels as he reached each wall, exactly as a wild beast does in a cage. His pride was suffering intolerably; but it was not wounded pride alone which was harrying him: despair had taken possession of him, fury was choking him, the thirst for vengeance was kindled within him. But against whom? On whom was he to revenge himself? The Jew, Yaff, Másha, the deacon, the thieving kazák, all his neighbours, the whole world, himself in conclusion? His mind became confused. His last card had been trumped! (This comparison pleased him.) And again he was the most insignificant, the most despised of men, a general laughing-stock, a ridiculous fool, a thorough-going idiot, an object of derision to—the deacon! ! . . . He imagined that he could picture clearly to himself how that vile pig-tail would take to telling about the grey horse, about the stupid gentleman. . . . O damn it! . . . In vain did Tchertopkhánoff strive to suppress the rising bile; in vain did he strive to convince himself that that horse, ... although not Malek-Adel, was every whit as good as he, and

might serve him for many years: he immediately repelled this thought with vehemence, as though it contained a fresh insult for *that* Malek-Adel toward whom he already, and without that, felt himself to blame. . . . . The idea! Like a blind man, like a dolt, he had placed that carrion, that jade, on a level with him, with Malek-Adel! And as for the service which that vile nag might still render him . . . . why, would he ever deign to mount it? Not for anything on earth! Never!! . . . . He would give it to a Tatár,[1] to the dogs to eat—that was all it was good for. . . . Yes! that would be best of all!

For more than two hours Tchertopkhánoff wandered about his room.

"Perfíshka!"—he suddenly issued his command. "Go to the dram-shop this very instant; bring hither a gallon and a half of vódka! Dost hear me? A gallon and a half of vódka, and be quick about it! Let the vódka be here instantly, and standing on my table!"

The vódka made its appearance without delay on Panteléi Eremyéitch's table, and he began to drink!

XIII

Any one who had looked at Tchertopkhánoff then, any one who could have witnessed the grim viciousness wherewith he drained glass after glass,

[1] The Tatárs are extremely fond of horseflesh. In St. Petersburg and Moscow (where they pursue the avocations of old-clothes men and waiters) horse-meat shops exist for their benefit.—Translator.

would certainly have felt an involuntary terror. Night came; a tallow candle burned dimly on the table. Tchertopkhánoff had ceased to rove from corner to corner; he sat, all red in the face, with dimmed eyes, which he sometimes lowered to the floor, sometimes riveted persistently on the dark window; he would rise to his feet, pour himself out some vódka, drink it off, then sit down again, again fix his eyes on one point, and never stir—except that his breathing grew quick, and his face more scarlet. It seemed as though some decision were ripening within him, which daunted him, but to which he was gradually accustoming himself; one and the same thought importunately and uninterruptedly moved up ever closer and closer, one and the same image delineated itself ever more and more clearly ahead; and in his heart, under the inflaming pressure of heavy intoxication, the irritation of wrath was replaced by a feeling of fierceness, and a grin which boded no good made its appearance on his lips.

"Well, all the same, 't is time!"—he said, in a businesslike, almost bored tone:—"'t is time to stop taking my ease!"

He drank off the last glass of the vódka, got his pistol from under his bed,—the same pistol from which he had fired at Másha,—loaded it, put several percussion-caps in his pocket, "in case of need," and set off for the stable.

The watchman started to run to him when he began to open the door, but he shouted at him:

"It is I! Dost not thou see? Begone!" The watchman withdrew a little to one side. "Go off to thy bed!" Tchertopkhánoff shouted at him: "there's no need for thee to stand on guard here! A fine wonder, what a treasure!" He entered the stable. Malek-Adel . . . . the false Malek-Adel, was lying on the litter. Tchertopkhánoff gave him a kick, saying: "Get up, thou crow!" Then he untied the halter from the manger, took off the blanket and flung it on the ground, and roughly turning the obedient horse round in the stall, he led it forth into the yard, and from the yard into the open fields, to the intense amazement of the watchman, who could not possibly comprehend where the master was going by night with the bridleless horse in tow. He was afraid to ask him, of course; so merely followed him with his eyes until he disappeared at the turn of the road which led to the neighbouring forest.

XIV

Tchertopkhánoff walked with huge strides, neither halting nor looking behind him. Malek-Adel—we shall call him by that name to the end—followed submissively in his wake. The night was fairly light; Tchertopkhánoff could distinguish the indented outline of the forest, which rose blackly in front of him, like a dark blotch. Thus embraced by the nocturnal chill, he cer-

tainly would have felt the intoxicating effects of the vódka he had drunk, had it not been . . . . had it not been for another, a more powerful intoxication, which had taken complete possession of him. His head grew heavy, the blood throbbed with a roar in his throat and ears, but he walked on firmly, and knew where he was going.

He had decided to kill Malek-Adel; all day long he had thought of nothing else. . . . . Now he had reached a decision!

He proceeded to this deed, not precisely with composure, but with confidence, irrevocably, as a man proceeds who is obeying a sense of duty. It seemed to him a very " simple matter " to annihilate this pretender, he would thereby be quits with " everybody," would also punish himself for his stupidity, justify himself to his genuine friend, and demonstrate to the whole world (Tchertopkhánoff was greatly concerned about " the whole world ") that no one could jest with him. . . . But the principal thing was,—that he meant to annihilate himself along with the pretender, for what was there now left for him to live for? How all this had stowed itself away in his head, and why it seemed to him so simple, it is not easy, although it is not utterly impossible, to explain: wounded, solitary, without a single human soul who was near to him, without a copper farthing, and with his blood heated by liquor, to boot, he was in a condition bordering on insanity, and there

can be no doubt that, in the most absurd freaks of insane people, there is a sort of logic and even right in their eyes. As to the right, Tchertopkhánoff was, at any rate, fully convinced; he did not hesitate, he made haste to execute the sentence on the criminal, without, however, clearly rendering himself an account as to whom, precisely, he was calling by that name. . . . Truth to tell, he had reflected very little on what he was about to do. "I must make an end of it—I must," was what he kept repeating to himself, dully and sternly: "I must make an end of it!"

And the innocent culprit trotted obediently behind him. . . . But there was no pity in Tchertopkhánoff's heart.

XV

Not far from the edge of the forest, whither he was leading his horse, stretched a small ravine, half overgrown with oak bushes. Tchertopkhánoff descended into it. . . . Malek-Adel stumbled and came near falling on him.

"Dost want to crush me, damn thee!"—shouted Tchertopkhánoff—and, as though defending himself, he jerked the pistol out of his pocket.

He no longer felt hardness, but that peculiar wooden rigidity of the emotions which is said to take possession of a man before the perpetration of a crime. But his own voice frightened him—so savagely did it resound beneath the canopy of

the dark boughs, in the decaying and stifling dampness of the forest ravine! Moreover, in reply to his exclamation, some large bird or other suddenly began to rustle in the crest of the tree over his head. . . . Tchertopkhánoff shuddered. It was as though he had aroused a witness to his deed—and where? In this remote spot, where he should not have encountered a single living creature! . . .

"Begone, devil, to the four winds!"—he said through his teeth—and relinquishing Malek-Adel's bridle, he dealt him a flourishing blow on the shoulder with the butt of the pistol. Malek-Adel immediately turned back, scrambled out of the ravine . . . . and set off at a gallop. But the sound of his hoof-beats was not audible long. The rising wind interfered and shrouded all sounds.

Tchertopkhánoff, in his turn, slowly made his way out of the ravine, gained the edge of the forest, and trudged homeward. He was dissatisfied with himself: the heaviness which he felt in his head and in his heart diffused itself over all his limbs; he strode onward—angry, gloomy, dissatisfied, hungry, exactly as though some one had insulted him, had robbed him of his booty, his food. . . .

A suicide who has been prevented from carrying out his intentions is acquainted with such sensations.

All at once, something touched him from be-

hind, on the shoulder. He glanced round. . . . Malek-Adel was standing in the middle of the road. He had followed his master, he had touched him with his muzzle, he had announced his presence. . . .

"Ah!" — screamed Tchertopkhánoff, — "so thou hast come thyself, of thine own accord, to thy death! Then take that!"

In the twinkling of an eye he pulled out his pistol, cocked it, placed the muzzle to Malek-Adel's forehead, and fired. . . .

The poor horse sprang to one side, reared up on his hind legs, leaped back half a score of paces, and suddenly fell heavily to the ground and began to rattle hoarsely in his throat, as he writhed convulsively on the ground. . . .

Tchertopkhánoff stopped up his ears with both hands and set off on a run. His knees gave way beneath him. Intoxication, and fury, and blind self-confidence—all deserted him on the instant. Nothing remained but a feeling of shame and disgust, and the consciousness, the indubitable consciousness, that this time he had done for himself also.

XVI

Six weeks later, Perfíshka the page considered it his duty to stop the commissary of rural police as the latter was passing Bezsónovo manor-house.

"What dost thou want?"—inquired the guardian of order.

"Please, Your Well-Born, come into our house,"—replied the page, with a low bow: "Panteléi Eremyéitch seems to be on the point of death; and so, I 'm afraid."

"What? He is dying?" questioned the commissary.

"Exactly so, sir. At first he drank vódka every day, but now, you see, he has taken to his bed, and has got very ill. I don't suppose he can understand anything now. He 's perfectly speechless."

The commissary alighted from his cart.—"Well, hast thou not been to summon the priest, at least? Has thy master made his confession? Has he received the Sacrament?"

"No, sir, he has not."

The commissary of police frowned.—"How comes that, my good fellow? Is that the proper way to behave—hey? Or dost not thou know . . . that the responsibility for it is very great—hey?"

"But I asked him the day before yesterday, and yesterday, too," put in the intimidated page,—"'Do not you command me,' says I, 'Panteléi Eremyéitch, to run for the priest?'—'Hold thy tongue, fool,' says he. 'Don't meddle in what is n't thy business.' And to-day, when I began to report—he merely stared at me—and twitched his moustache."

"And has he drunk much vódka?"—asked the commissary.

"An awful lot!—But be so good, Your Well-Born, as to come to his room."

"Well, lead the way!"—growled the commissary, and followed Perfíshka.

An astonishing sight awaited him.

In the rear room of the house, dark and damp, on a miserable pallet, covered with a horse-blanket, with a shaggy kazák felt cloak in place of a pillow, lay Tchertopkhánoff, no longer pale, but of a yellowish-green hue, like a corpse, with eyes sunken beneath glossy lids, with a sharpened but still crimson nose above his dishevelled moustache. He was lying arrayed in his inevitable kazák coat, with the cartridge-cases on his breast, and full Circassian trousers. A kazák fur cap with a deep crimson top covered his forehead to his very eyebrows. In one hand Tchertopkhánoff held his kazák hunting-whip, in the other an embroidered tobacco-pouch, Másha's last gift. On the table by the bedside stood an empty liquor-bottle; and at the head of the bed, fastened to the wall with pins, two water-colour drawings were visible: one, so far as could be discerned, represented a fat man with a guitar in his hands—probably, Nedopiúskin; the other depicted a galloping horseman. . . . . The horse resembled those fabulous animals which children draw on walls and fences; but the carefully

shaded dapples on its flanks and the cartridge-cases on the rider's breast, the pointed toes of his boots, and his huge moustache left no room for doubt: the sketch was intended to depict Panteléi Eremyéitch mounted on Malek-Adel.

The astonished commissary of police did not know what to do. Deathly silence reigned in the room. "Why, he has already expired," he said to himself, and, raising his voice, he said:—"Panteléi Eremyéitch! Hey there, Panteléi Eremyéitch!"

Then something remarkable took place. Tchertopkhánoff's eyes slowly opened, the extinguished pupils moved first to the right, then to the left, came to a rest on the visitor, and saw him. . . . Something glimmered in their dull whiteness, the semblance of a glance made its appearance in them;—the lips, already blue, gradually parted, and a hoarse, already sepulchral voice made itself heard.

"Panteléi Tchertopkhánoff, nobleman of ancient lineage, is dying; who can hinder him?—He is indebted to no one, he demands nothing. . . . Leave him, ye people! Begone!"

The hand which held the kazák whip made an effort to rise. . . . . In vain! The lips again adhered to each other, the eyes closed, and Tchertopkhánoff lay as before on his hard pallet, stretched out flat and with his feet drawn close together.

"Let me know when he is dead,"—whispered the commissary of police to Perfíshka, as he left the room;—"and I think thou mightest go for the priest now. Due order must be observed,—he must receive Holy Unction." [1]

That same day Perfíshka went for the priest; and on the following morning he had to notify the commissary of police that Panteléi Eremyéitch had died that night.

At his funeral, his coffin was escorted by two men: Perfíshka, the page, and Moshel Leiba. The news of Tchertopkhánoff's demise had, in some manner, reached the Jew; and he had not failed to pay his last debt to his benefactor.

[1] This unction in the Eastern Catholic Church is not Extreme Unction in the sense of those words in the Roman Church, although it is generally administered before death. In the true spirit of James v, 14–15 it may be administered any number of times during life, when a person is ill and not expected to die. The full rite calls for seven priests, but one priest can administer it.—TRANSLATOR.

X

LIVING HOLY RELICS

O native land of patient fortitude—
Land of the Russian folk art thou!
—F. Tiútcheff.

A French saying runs: "A dry fisherman and a wet sportsman are sorry sights." As I have no partiality for fishing, I am not able to judge of a fisherman's feelings in fine, clear weather, and to what degree the satisfaction afforded him in stormy weather by an abundant catch outweighs the unpleasantness of being wet. But for the sportsman rain is a veritable calamity. To precisely such a calamity were Eremyéi and I exposed during one of our excursions after woodcock in the Byélovoe district. The rain had not ceased falling since daybreak. What did not we do to escape from it! We drew our rubber coats up almost over our heads, and stood under trees, so that there might be less dripping. . . . The waterproof coats let the water through in the most shameless manner, not to mention the fact that they interfered with our shooting; while, although at first it did not appear to drip under the trees, yet later on the moisture, which had been gradually accumulating on the foliage, suddenly

broke through, every branch showered down on us water as though from a rain-spout, a chilly stream made its way under my neckerchief and trickled down my spine. . . . Well, this was " the last straw "! as Ermolái was wont to express himself.—" No, Piótr Petróvitch,"—he exclaimed at last. " This is unendurable! . . . . We cannot hunt to-day. The dogs' scent will be drowned out; the guns will miss fire. . . . Phew! What a mess! "

" What is to be done? "—I asked.

" Why, this.—Let us go to Alexyéevka. Perhaps you do not know that there is a farm there which belongs to your mother; it is eight versts from here. We can pass the night there, and to-morrow . . . ."

" We can return here? "

" No, not here. . . . I know some places the other side of Alexyéevka . . . . . much better places for woodcock."

I did not interrogate my faithful companion as to why he had not guided me straight to those places and that same day we reached my mother's farm, whose existence, I must confess, I had not hitherto suspected. At the farm there turned out to be a small, detached building, very old, but not inhabited, and therefore clean; in it I passed a fairly quiet night.

On the following morning I awoke very early. The sun had only just risen; there was not a sin-

gle cloud in the sky; everything round about was glistening with a powerful double gleam: the gleam of the young morning rays, and of the heavy rain of the day before.—While my two-wheeled cart was being harnessed, I went off for a stroll in the small garden, which had formerly been a fruit orchard, and was now utterly run wild, surrounding the little wing on all sides with its fragrant, succulent thickets. Akh, how good it was in the open air, beneath the clear sky, where the larks were trilling, whence the silver notes of their ringing voices showered down! They had, probably, borne off drops of dew on their wings, and their songs seemed besprinkled with dew. I even took my hat from my head, and inhaled joyously, to the full extent of my lungs. . . . On the slope of a small ravine, close beside the wattled fence, a collection of beehives was visible; a narrow path led to it, winding in serpentine fashion between dense walls of tall steppe-grass and nettles, over which hung, brought God knows whence, the sharp-tipped stalks of dark-green hemp.

I wended my way along this path, and reached the beehives. Alongside them, stood a small shed with wattled walls,[1] a so-called *amshánik,* where coals are stored for winter use. I glanced in at the half-open door; it was dark, still, dry;

[1] In the centre and south of Russia, where wood is scarce, fences and walls are made of tree-boughs interwoven.—TRANSLATOR.

there was an odour of mint and sweet-clover. In one corner a platform had been fitted, and on it, covered with a quilt, lay a tiny figure. . . . I was on the point of beating a retreat . . . .

"Master, hey, master! Piótr Petróvitch!"—I heard a voice, weak, slow, and hoarse, like the rustling of marsh sedges.

I stopped.

"Piótr Petróvitch! Come hither, please!"—repeated the voice. It was wafted to me from the corner with the platform which I had noticed.

I approached—and grew rigid with amazement. Before me lay a living human being; but what did it mean?

The head was completely dried up, all of one bronze hue,—precisely like a holy picture painted in ancient times; the nose was as narrow as the blade of a knife; the lips were hardly visible,—only the teeth and the eyes gleamed white, and from beneath the kerchief thin strands of yellow hair escaped upon the forehead. Two tiny hands, also bronze in colour, were moving by the chin, at the fold of the coverlet, the fingers like little sticks intertwining slowly. I looked more attentively: the face was not only not hideous, it was even beautiful,—but terrible, remarkable. And the face seemed all the more terrible to me, because I saw that a smile was striving . . . . striving to spread over it,—over its metallic cheeks,—and could not.

"Don't you recognise me, master?"—whispered the voice again; it seemed to evaporate from the barely-moving lips.—"But how should you!—I am Lukérya. . . . You remember, the one who used to lead the choral songs and dances at your mother's, at Spásskoe? . . . I was the leader of the singers, as well; don't you remember?"

"Lukérya!"—I exclaimed.—"Art thou she? Is it possible?"

"Yes, it is I, master,—I am Lukérya."

I did not know what to say, and stared like one stunned at that dark, motionless face with the clear and deathly eyes riveted upon me. Was it possible? That mummy was Lukérya, the greatest beauty among all our domestics,—tall, plump, white, and red,—the giggler, the dancer, the singer! Lukérya, the clever Lukérya, to whom all our young men had paid court, for whom I myself had sighed in secret,—I, a lad of sixteen!

"Good heavens, Lukérya,"—I said at last:—"what has happened to thee?"

"Why, such a calamity has befallen me! But do not look at me with aversion, master, do not loathe my misfortune,—sit down on that small tub yonder,—come nearer, or you will not be able to hear me. . . . I have become so loud-voiced, you see! . . . . Well, and how glad I am to see you! How comes it that you are in Alexyéevka?"

Lukérya spoke very softly and feebly, but without any breaks.

"Ermolái the hunter brought me hither. . But tell me . . . ."

"I am to tell you about my misfortune?—Certainly, master. It happened to me long since,—six or seven years ago. They had just betrothed me to Vasíly Polyakóff,—do you remember, he was such a stately, curly-haired fellow,—he used to serve in your mother's house as butler? But you were no longer in the country at that time; you had gone away to Moscow to study.—Vasíly and I were very much in love with each other; I thought of him continually; and it happened in the spring. So, one night . . . it was not long before dawn . . . and I could not sleep: the nightingale in the garden was singing with such wonderful sweetness! . . . . . I could bear it no longer, so I got up, and went out on the porch to listen to it. It warbled and warbled . . . and suddenly it seemed to me that some one was calling me in Vásya's voice, softly, so: 'Lúsha!' . . . . I glanced aside, and not being fully awake, you know, I made a misstep, straight from the landing, and flew down—bang! on the ground. And I did not appear to have hurt myself badly, for I soon rose and returned to my chamber. Only, it was as though something inside me—in my belly—had been broken. . . . Let me take breath . . . . . for just a minute . . . . master."

Lukérya stopped speaking, and I stared at her in amazement. What particularly astounded me was, that she told her story almost cheerily, without any groans and sighs, without making the slightest complaint, and without any appeal for sympathy.

"From the moment of that accident,"—went on Lukérya,—"I began to wither, to pine away; I began to turn black; it became difficult for me to walk, and I had not full control of my legs; I could neither stand nor sit; I wanted to lie down all the time. I did n't feel like either eating or drinking: I grew worse and worse. Your mother, in her goodness, showed me to the doctors, and sent me to the hospital. But I obtained no relief. And not a single doctor could even tell what sort of malady I had. They did all sorts of things to me: they burned my back with red-hot irons, they laid me in cracked ice—but it did no good. At last, I got perfectly ossified. . . . . Then the gentlemen decided that it was useless to treat me any longer, and it was n't fitting that a cripple should be kept in the gentry's manor-house . . . . . well, and so they transferred me hither,—I have relatives here. And so I live as you see."

Again Lukérya ceased speaking, and again she tried to smile.

"But thy condition is frightful!"—I exclaimed . . . and, without knowing what more

to say, I inquired:—"And what about Vasíly Polyakóff?"—It was a very stupid question.

Lukérya turned her eyes aside.

"What about Polyakóff?—He grieved and grieved,—and then he married another, a girl from Glínnoe. Do you know Glínnoe? It lies not far from us. Her name was Agraféna. He was very fond of me,—but he was a young man, you see,—he could not remain a bachelor. And how could I be his dear friend? But he has found for himself a good, kind wife,—and he has children. He lives there as manager to a neighbour; your mother gave him his passport, and he's doing very well, thank God!"

"And so thou liest here always like this?"—I put another question.

"And so I lie here like this, master, this is the seventh year. In summer I lie here in this wattled shed, and when cold weather comes on they carry me to the anteroom of the bath-house. There I lie."

"But who tends on thee? Does any one look after thee?"

"Why, there are kind people here also. They do not desert me. And I do not need much looking after. As for eating—I eat hardly anything, and as for water—yonder it is, in that jug: it always stands filled with pure spring water. I can reach the jug for myself: I can still use one of my hands. And then there is a little girl, an

orphan; she always gives me what I need, thanks to her. She was here a little while ago. . . . . Did n't you meet her? She 's such a pretty, white little thing. She brings me flowers; I 'm very fond of them,—of flowers, I mean. We have no garden-flowers here,—there were some, but they have run out. But the wild flowers are nice too, you know; they smell even better than the garden-flowers. Take lilies of the valley, for instance . . . . what can be more agreeable!"

"Dost thou never feel bored or afraid, my poor Lukérya?"

"But what is one to do? I will not lie—at first I found it very tiresome; but afterward I got used to it, I grew patient,—'t is nothing, some people are still worse off."

"How so?"

"Why, one person has no shelter! Another is blind or deaf! But I, thank God, can see splendidly, and hear everything, everything. If a mole is burrowing underground, I hear it. And I can detect every odour, no matter how faint it is! If the buckwheat in the fields comes into bloom, or the linden in the garden,—it is not necessary to tell me about it: I am the first of all to perceive it, if only the breeze blows from that quarter. No, why anger God?—many people are worse off than I. Take this, for example: a healthy man can very easily fall into sin; but from me sin has departed of itself. A while ago,

Father Alexyéi undertook to give me the Sacrament, and he said: ' There 's no use in confessing thee: is it possible for thee to sin in thy condition?' —But I answered him:—' And how about sin of thought, bátiushka? ' [1]—' Well,' says he, and begins to laugh, ' that 's no great sin.'

" And it must be that I am not very guilty of that same,—that mental sin,"—went on Lukérya, —" because I have trained myself so: not to think, and—most of all—not to remember. The time passes more quickly so."

I must confess that I was astonished.—" Thou art always entirely alone, Lukérya? Then how canst thou prevent thoughts from coming into thy head? Or dost thou sleep all the time? "

" Oï, no, master! I am not always able to sleep. Although I do not suffer great pain,—yet there is a gnawing there inside me, and in my bones also; it will not let me sleep as I should. No. . . . I just lie here by myself, and lie and lie—and don't think; I am conscious that I am alive, I breathe—and that is all. I see, I hear. The bees hum and drone among the hives; a pigeon alights on the roof and begins to coo; a mother-hen comes along with her chicks and begins to peck up the crumbs; or a sparrow or a butterfly flutters in—which pleases me very much. The year before last the swallows built themselves

[1] " Dear little father," literally; used in respectfully-affectionate address to a man of any rank, from the Emperor down, but especially the prerogative of the priesthood.—TRANSLATOR.

a nest yonder in the corner, and raised their brood. How interesting it was! One would fly to the nest, alight on it, and feed the babies—and off it would go again. And lo, the other one would take its place. Sometimes the bird would not fly in, but merely dash across the open door—but the nestlings would immediately begin to squeak, and open their bills. . . . I watched for them the next year, but I was told that one of the sportsmen in the neighbourhood had shot them. And why did he covet them? For, altogether, a swallow is no bigger than a beetle. . . . How wicked you sportsmen are!"

"I do not shoot swallows,"—I hastened to remark.

"And then, once, what a good laugh I had!" —began Lukérya again.—"A hare ran in,—it really did! The dogs were chasing it, I suppose, —only it seemed just to roll in through the door! . . . . It squatted down quite close to me, and sat there for a long time,—and kept moving its nose and twitching its moustache, just like an officer! And it stared at me. It understood, probably, that I was not dangerous to it. At last it got up, went hop-hop to the door, glanced round on the threshold—and vanished from sight! It was so funny!"

Lukérya cast a glance at me . . . . as much as to ask: "Was n't it funny?" I laughed to please her. She bit her withered lips.

"Well, and in winter, I am not so well off, of

course: because it is dark; one hates to light a candle, and what 's the use of it? Although I can read and write, and was always fond of reading, what is there for me to read? There are no books whatever here, and even if there were any, how could I hold a book? Father Alexyéi brought me a calendar to divert me, but saw that it was useless, so he took and carried it away again. But although it is dark, there is always something to listen to: a cricket will begin to chirp or a mouse to gnaw somewhere.—And under such circumstances it is a good thing not to think!

" And then I recite prayers,"—continued Lukérya, after resting a while.—" Only I don't know many of them,—of those same prayers. And why should I worry the Lord God? What can I ask of Him? He knows better than I do what I need. He has sent me a cross—which signifies that He loves me. We are commanded to understand it so. I repeat the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the acathistus [1] to the Virgin of Sorrows,—and then I go on lying here without any thought at all. And I don't mind it! "

A couple of minutes passed. I did not break the silence, and did not stir on the narrow tub which served me as a seat. The stiff, stony im-

[1] A service of hymns and prayers to the Saviour, the Virgin Mother, or a Saint. The congregation stands throughout.—TRANSLATOR.

mobility of the living, unhappy being who lay there before me had communicated itself to me: I also seemed to have become petrified.

"Hearken, Lukérya," — I said at last. — "Hearken to the proposition which I am about to make to thee. I will have thee taken to a hospital, to a good hospital in the town: wouldst thou like that? Perhaps they can cure thee—who knows? At any rate, thou wilt not be alone. . . ."

Lukérya contracted her brows almost imperceptibly.—"Okh, no, master,"—she said, in an anxious whisper,—"don't transfer me to the hospital, don't touch me. I shall only undergo more tortures there.—Cure me indeed! Why, a doctor once came here, and wanted to examine me. I begged him: 'Do not disturb me, for Christ's sake!' It was no use! He began to turn me about, he kneaded and bent my arms and legs, and says he: 'I 'm doing this in the interests of science; that 's what I 'm a learned man in the service for! And thou,' says he, 'canst not oppose me, because I have been given an Order to wear on my neck for my labours, and I exert myself for the benefit of you fools!' He mauled me, and mauled me, and told me the name of my ailment, —such a hard name,—and then he went away. And all my bones ached for a whole week afterward. You say that I am alone, always alone. No, not always. People come to me. I am quiet, I do not disturb them. The young peasant girls

drop in, and chatter; a pilgrim strays in, and begins to tell me about Jerusalem, about Kíeff, about the holy cities. And I am not afraid to be alone. I even like it better so, truly I do! . . . . Don't touch me, master, don't take me to the hospital. . . . . I thank you,—you are kind,—only don't touch me, my dear little dove."

"Well, as thou wilt, as thou wilt, Lukérya. I meant it for thy good, seest thou. . . ."

"I know, master, that it was for my good. But, master dear, who can help another? Who can enter into this soul? A man must help himself! Now, you will not believe it—but I sometimes lie here alone like this . . . . . and it seems as though there were not another person in all the world except myself. I alone am living! And I feel as though something were blessing me. . . . Thoughts come to me—even wonderful thoughts."

"What dost thou think about at such times, Lukérya?"

"'T is utterly impossible to tell thee that, master: it can't be explained. And one forgets it afterward, too. It is as though a little cloud descended, and spread abroad, and everything becomes so cool and pleasant,—but what has happened you can't understand. Only, I think to myself: 'If there were people about me, nothing of this sort would take place, and I should feel nothing, except my own misfortune.'"

Lukérya drew breath with difficulty. Her lungs did not obey her, any more than the rest of her members.

"When I look at you, master,"—she began again,—"I feel very sorry for you. But you must not pity me too much, really! I'll tell you something, for example: sometimes, even now, I . . . . Of course, you remember what a merry girl I was in my day? A dashing maid! . . . So, do you know what? I sing songs even now."

"Songs? . . . . Thou?"

"Yes, songs, ancient ballads, choral songs,[1] Christmas carols, all sorts of songs! I knew a great many, you see, and have not forgotten them. Only I don't sing any dance-songs. It is n't fitting,—in my present condition."

"But how dost thou sing them . . . . . to thyself?"

"Both to myself and with my voice. I can't sing loudly, but they are audible, nevertheless. There now, I have told you that a little maid comes to me. She 's a quick-witted orphan, you see. So I have taught her; she has already learned four songs from me. Don't you believe it? Wait,—in a minute I 'll . . . ."

Lukérya mustered her forces. . . . The thought that this half-dead being was preparing

[1] The choral songs which accompany the games of the peasant girls. Many of these games consist of slow, circling movements.—TRANSLATOR.

to sing aroused in me involuntary terror. But before I could utter a word, a prolonged, barely audible, but pure and true sound trembled on my ears . . . . followed by a second, a third. Lukérya was singing "In the Meadows." She sang without altering the expression of her petrified countenance, even fixing her eyes in a stare. But so touchingly did that poor, forced little voice ring forth, like a wreath of undulating smoke, so greatly did her soul long to pour itself out . . . . that I no longer felt terror: unutterable pity gripped my heart.

"Okh, I cannot!"—she said suddenly,—"I have not the strength. . . . . It has given me great pleasure to see you."

She closed her eyes.

I laid my hand on her tiny, cold fingers. . . . She darted a glance at me—and her dark eyelids, fringed with golden lashes, as in an ancient statue, closed again. A moment later, they began to gleam in the semi-darkness. . . . . They were wet with tears.

As before, I did not stir.

"What a goose I am!"—said Lukérya suddenly, with unexpected force, and opening her eyes wide, she tried to wink the tears from them. —"Is n't it shameful? What ails me? 'T is a long time since anything of this sort happened with me . . . . not since the day when Vasíly Polyakóff came to me, last spring. As long as he

was sitting and talking with me, it was all right; but when he went away, I just cried all by myself! I can't tell what made me do it! . . . . Tears come easy to us women, you know. Master,"—added Lukérya,—" you have a handkerchief, I suppose. . . . Don't disdain to wipe my eyes. . . ."

I hastened to comply with her request—and left her the handkerchief. At first she tried to refuse . . . . . saying: " Why should you make me such a gift? " The handkerchief was a very plain one, but clean and white. Then she seized it in her feeble fingers, and did not relax them again. Having become accustomed to the gloom in which we both were, I could distinctly discern her features, could even detect a faint flush which flitted across the bronze of her face, could discover in that face—at least so it seemed to me—traces of its former beauty.

" You were asking me, master,"—Lukérya again began to speak,—" whether I sleep? As a matter of fact, I sleep rarely; but when I do, I have such fine dreams! I never see myself as ill: in my dreams I am always so healthy and young. . . . . One thing is unfortunate: I wake up, and want to stretch myself well, and lo! I am as though fettered all over. Once I had a wonderful dream! I 'll tell you about it, shall I?—Well then, listen.—I seem to be standing in a field, and all around is rye, so tall and ripe and golden! . . .

And I seem to have with me a small, reddish dog, a very, very vicious beast—it is continually trying to bite me. And there seems to be a reaping-hook in my hands—not an ordinary hook, but exactly like the moon when it resembles a reaping-hook. And with that moon I am to reap the rye clean. But I am greatly fatigued with the heat, and that moon dazzles me, and languor comes upon me; and all around corn-flowers are growing, and such big ones! And they have turned their little heads toward me. And I think to myself: 'I will pluck those corn-flowers; Vásya has promised to come —so I will first weave myself a wreath; I shall have time to do the reaping.' I begin to pluck corn-flowers, but they begin to melt away,—melt away between my fingers,—I never saw anything like it! And I cannot weave myself a wreath. But, in the meantime, I hear some one coming toward me, so close, and calling: 'Lúsha! Lúsha!' . . . . . 'Aï,' thinks I to myself, 'woe is me, I have n't got through the reaping! Nevertheless, I will place the moon on my head instead of the corn-flowers.' I put on the moon exactly like a kokóshnik,[1] and immediately I myself began to beam all over, and lighted up the whole field. And lo! over the very crests of the rye-ears, there comes swiftly advancing toward me—not Vásya, but Christ Himself! And how I

[1] The coronet-shaped head-dress of the peasant maidens.—TRANSLATOR.

knew that it was Christ, I cannot tell.—He is not painted in that way,—but it was no one else but He! Beardless, tall, young, clad all in white,—only His girdle was of gold,—and He stretches out His hand to me.—'Fear not, my bride adorned for my coming,'—He says, 'follow me: thou shalt lead the chorals in my heavenly kingdom, and play the songs of paradise!'—And how I glue my lips to His hand!—My dog instantly falls at my feet . . . . but then we soared upward! He in front . . . . His wings spread out over all the sky, as long as those of a sea-gull,—and I after Him. And the little dog was forced to leave me. Only then did I understand that that dog was my malady, and that in the kingdom of heaven there will be no room for it."

Lukérya paused for a moment.

"And I saw something else in a dream,"—she began anew,—"or perhaps it was a vision—really, I do not know. It seemed to me that I am lying in this same wattled shed, and my dead parents come to me,—my father and my mother,—and bow low before me, but say nothing. And I ask them: 'Why do you do reverence to me, dear father and mother?'—'Because,'—they say to me, 'in that thou sufferest great torture in this world, thou hast not only lightened thine own soul, but hast removed from us also a great burden. And things have become much more propitious for us in the other world. Thou hast al-

ready finished with thine own sins; now thou art conquering our sins.' And having spoken thus, my parents did me reverence again—and became invisible; only the walls were visible. I was greatly perplexed afterward as to what had happened to me. I even told the priest about it in confession. But he thinks that it was not a vision, because only persons of the ecclesiastical profession have visions.

"And then, here is another dream I had,"—pursued Lukérya.—"I see myself sitting, apparently, on the highway, under a willow-tree, holding a peeled staff in my hand, with a wallet on my shoulders, and my head enveloped in a kerchief—a regular tramp! And I have to go somewhere very, very far off, on a pilgrimage. And tramps keep passing me; they are walking softly, as though unwillingly, and all in one direction; all their faces are dejected, and they all resemble one another greatly. And I see that a woman is winding in and out, darting about among them; and she is a whole head taller than all the rest, and she wears a peculiar garb, not like ours, not Russian. And she has a peculiar face, too,—a fasting, stern face. And all the others seem to draw away from her, and, all of a sudden, she wheels round, and makes straight toward me. She comes to a halt and gazes, and her eyes are like those of a falcon, yellow, large, and bright, very bright. And I ask her: 'Who

art thou?'—And she says to me: 'I am thy death.' I suppose I ought to have felt afraid; but, on the contrary, I am glad, so very glad, and I cross myself! And the woman says to me: 'I am sorry for thee, Lukérya, but I cannot take thee with me.—Farewell!'—O Lord! how sad I became then! . . . . 'Take me,' I say, 'dear little mother, my dear little dove, take me!'—And my death turned round to me, and began to reprimand me. . . . . I understand that she is appointing me my hour, but so unintelligibly, indistinctly. . . . 'After the fast of St. Peter,' says she. . . Thereupon I awoke. . . . I do have such wonderful dreams!"

Lukérya raised her eyes upward . . . . became pensive. . . .

"Only, this is my misfortune: it sometimes happens that a whole week will pass without my getting to sleep a single time. Last year a lady passed by, and saw me, and gave me a phial with medicine to prevent sleeplessness; she ordered me to take ten drops at a time. It helped me a great deal, and I slept; only the phial was emptied long ago. . . . Don't you know what medicine it was, and how I could get some?"

The passing lady had, evidently, given Lukérya opium. I promised to procure for her another such phial, and again could not help expressing aloud my amazement at her patience.

"Ekh, master!" — she returned. — "What

makes you say that? What do you mean by patience? There was Simeon the Stylite, he had great patience: he stood for thirty years on a pillar! And another saint ordered them to bury him in the earth up to his very chest, and the ants devoured his face. . . . And here is something which a well-read person once told me: there was a certain country, and Agarians [1] conquered that country, and they tortured and slew all the inhabitants; and do what the inhabitants would, they could not possibly free themselves. And then a holy, chaste virgin woman made her appearance among those inhabitants; she took a great sword, put on armour eighty pounds in weight, went against the Agarians, and drove them all beyond the sea. Then, after she had driven them out, she said to the people: 'Now do you burn me, for such was my vow, that I would die a death by fire for my people.'—And the Agarians took her and burned her, and that people set themselves free, from that time forth forever! That was a feat! But what have I done!"

Thereupon, I marvelled inwardly, at the place and the form which the legend of Jeanne d'Arc had attained, and, after preserving silence for a few moments, I asked Lukérya how old she was.

"Twenty-eight . . . . or nine. . . . I am not yet thirty. But what is the use of reckoning

[1] In Russian, *Englishmen* is *Anglitcháne*. Lukérya says *Agaryáne*.—Translator.

the years! Here 's something else I must tell you. . . ."

Suddenly Lukérya gave a dull cough, and groaned. . . .

"Thou art talking a great deal,"—I remarked to her,—"it may injure thee."

"That is true,"—she whispered in a barely audible tone,—"our conversation must end; but never mind! Now, when you are gone I can keep silent to my heart's content. At all events I have eased my soul. . . ."

I began to take leave of her, repeated my promise to send her the medicine, requested her to think it over once more thoroughly, and tell me whether she did not want something.

"I want nothing; I am content with everything, thank God!"—she articulated with a tremendous effort, but with emotion.—"May God grant health to all men! And see here, master, you ought to persuade your mother to reduce the quit-rent of the peasants here a little, at least—for they are very poor. They have not sufficient land, they have no pasture-land. . . . . They would pray to God for you if you did it. . . . But I need nothing.—I am content with everything."

I gave Lukérya my word that I would comply with her request, and was already at the door—when she called to me again.

"Do you remember, master," she said,—and

something wonderful flitted through her eyes and over her lips,—" what magnificent hair I had? It reached my very knees,—you remember! For a long time, I could not bring myself to . . . . Such hair as it was!—But how could I comb it? In my condition!—So I cut it off. . . Yes. . . . Well, good-bye, master! My strength is gone. . . ."

That same day, before I set out on my hunt, I had a conversation about Lukérya with the assistant manager of the farm. From him I learned that she was called in the village " The Living Holy Relics"; that no one ever beheld her uneasy: neither murmuring nor complaint was to be heard from her.—" She asks for nothing herself, but, on the contrary, she is thankful for everything; she 's the quietest of the quiet, I must say. She has been smitten by God,"—wound up the assistant manager,—" for her sins, it must be; but we don't go into that. And as for condemning her,—no, we do not condemn her. Leave her in peace! "

A FEW weeks later, I heard that Lukérya was dead. Death had come for her, after all . . . . and " after St. Peter's Day." The people narrated how, on the day of her death, she had heard uninterruptedly the chiming of bells, although it is reckoned more than five versts from Alex-

yéevka to the church, and it was a week-day. Moreover, Lukérya had said that the ringing did not proceed from the church, but "from up above." Probably she had not dared to say "from heaven."

XI

THE RATTLING

"I MUST tell you something,"—said Ermolái, as he entered my cottage: I had just eaten my dinner, and had lain down on the camp-bed, with a view to resting a little after a fairly successful, but fatiguing hunt for woodcock—it was about the tenth of July, and the heat was frightful. . . . "I must tell you something: we are completely out of bird-shot."

I sprang from the bed.

"Out of bird-shot? How is that? Why, we took about thirty pounds with us when we started from the village—a whole sackful!"

"That 's so; and it was a big sack: it ought to have been enough for a fortnight. But who knows! There may have been a hole in it; . . anyhow, there is n't any . . . . there 's enough left for about ten shots."

"What are we to do now? The very best places are ahead of us—we were promised six coveys for to-morrow. . . ."

"Send me to Túla.—It is n't far off: forty-five versts in all. I 'll fly like the wind and bring a whole pud [1] of bird-shot if you command me."

[1] About thirty-six pounds.—TRANSLATOR.

" But when wilt thou go? "

" Why, this very instant, if you like. What 's the use of putting it off? Only, here 's one thing: I must hire horses."

" What dost thou mean by hiring horses?—And what are our own for? "

" Our own can't be used.—The shaft-horse has gone lame . . . . awfully! "

" When did that happen? "

" Why, a little while ago,—the coachman took him to be shod. Well, and they shod him. He must have hit on a bad blacksmith.—Now the horse can't even step on that foot—his fore foot. So he carries it . . . . like a dog."

" What then? Have n't they removed the shoe, at least? "

" No, they have n't; but he certainly ought to have the shoe taken off. . . I think the nail must have been driven into the very flesh."

I ordered the coachman to be summoned. It turned out that Ermolái had told the truth: the shaft-horse really could not stand on his foot.—I immediately took measures for having the shoe removed and the horse placed on damp clay.

" Well? Do you order me to hire horses for Túla? "—Ermolái pressed me for an answer.

" Why, is it possible to find any horses in this remote wilderness? "—I exclaimed with involuntary irritation. . . .

The village in which we found ourselves was

out of the way, in the wilds; all its inhabitants appeared to be poverty-stricken; it was with difficulty that we had hunted up one cottage which, if not clean, was at least tolerably spacious.

"It is,"—replied Ermolái with his customary imperturbability. — "You have spoken truly about this village; only, in this same place there used to live one peasant.—Such a clever fellow! So rich! He had nine horses. He is dead, and his eldest son now administers everything. He 's a man—the stupidest of the stupid, but he has n't yet managed to get rid of all the paternal goods. —We 'll get some horses from him.—If you command, I will bring him here.—His brothers are lively lads, I 'm told . . . . nevertheless, he is their head."

"Why is that?"

"Because he 's the eldest!—That means,—Younger lads, obey!"—At this point, Ermolái expressed himself in strong and unprintable language about younger brothers in general.—"I 'll bring him. — He 's simple-minded. — You can make your own terms with him."

While Ermolái went in search of his "simple-minded" man, the idea occurred to me: "Would it not be better for me to go to Túla myself?" In the first place, taught by experience, I had not much confidence in Ermolái; I had once sent him to town to make some purchases, he had promised to execute my commissions in the space of one day

—and had disappeared for a whole week, had drunk up all the money, and had returned on foot, although he had set out in a racing-drozhky. In the second place, I was acquainted with a horse-dealer in Túla; I might buy from him a horse to take the place of the lame shaft-horse.

"That settles it!"—I thought.—"I 'll go myself; and I can sleep on the road—luckily, the tarantás is comfortable."

"I 've brought him!"—exclaimed Ermolái, a quarter of an hour later, tumbling into the cottage.—In his wake there entered a tall peasant, in a white shirt, blue trousers, and plaited linden-bark slippers,—a man with white eyelashes, bleareyed, with a small, red, wedge-shaped beard, a long, thick nose, and a gaping mouth. He really did look like a "weak-minded" person.

"Here, if you please,"—said Ermolái,—"he has horses, and he consents."

"This you see,—I . . . ." the peasant began in a husky voice and with a stutter, tossing back his thin hair, and fingering the rim of his cap, which he held in his hands.—"I, you see . . . . ."

"What is thy name?"—I inquired.

The peasant dropped his eyes and seemed to be meditating.—"What is my name, did you say?"

"Yes; what is thy name?"

"Why, my name will be Filoféi."

"Well, see here now, my good Filoféi; I hear

that thou hast horses.—Bring hither a tróïka,—we will hitch them to my tarantás,—it is a light one,—and do thou drive me to Túla. It is a moonlight night, the trip will be light and cool. What sort of a road have you thither?"

"Road? The road 's all right.—It 's twenty versts, all told, to the highway. There 's one small stretch . . . . . which is bad; otherwise, it 's all right."

"What is that bad stretch?"

"Why, the river must be forded."

"But are you going to Túla yourself?"—inquired Ermolái.

"Yes, I am."

"Well!"—said my faithful servitor, and shook his head.—"We-e-ell!"—he repeated, spat, and left the room.

The trip to Túla, evidently, no longer had any attractions; it had become for him an empty and uninteresting matter.

"Dost thou know the road well?"—I said, addressing Filoféi.

"Why should n't we know the road!—Only, you see, I can't go anyhow . . . . it 's so sudden. . . . ."

It turned out that Ermolái, in hiring Filoféi, had announced to him that he had no doubt that he, the fool, would be paid . . . . . and nothing more! Filoféi, although he was a fool, according to Ermolái's statement, was not satisfied

with that announcement alone. He demanded from me fifty rubles,—a huge sum; I offered him ten rubles,—a low price.—We began to haggle; at first, Filoféi was obdurate—then he began to yield, but slowly. Ermolái, who came in for a minute, began to assure me that "this fool"—("Evidently, he has taken a fancy to the word!"—commented Filoféi in an undertone)—"this fool does n't know the value of money"—and, incidentally, reminded me how, twenty years previously, the posting-station erected by my mother on a fine site, at the intersection of two highways, had sunk into utter decay, owing to the fact that the old house-serf, who had been placed there to manage the establishment, really did not know how to reckon money, and judged of it according to its quantity,—that is, he would give, for instance, a silver quarter-ruble for six copper five-kopék pieces, swearing roundly the while.

"Ekh, thou, Filoféi, art a regular Filoféi!"—ejaculated Ermolái at last,—and quitting the room in a rage, he banged the door behind him.

Filoféi made him no reply, as though conscious of the fact that to be named Filoféi was, in reality, not quite expedient, and that a man may be upbraided for it, although, properly speaking, the person to blame in the matter is the priest, who has not been as benignant to him as he should have been.

But, at last, we agreed upon twenty rubles.—He went off to get the horses, and an hour later led up five from which I was to make my choice. The horses seemed to be pretty good, although their manes and tails were tangled, and their bellies were big and taut as a drum.—With Filoféi came two of his brothers, who bore not the slightest resemblance to him. Small, black-eyed, sharp-nosed, they really did produce the impression of being "lively lads"; they talked much and fast,—"cackled," as Ermolái expressed it,—but rendered obedience to their elder brother.

They rolled the tarantás from beneath the shed, and worked over it and the horses for an hour and a half; now they loosened the rope traces, again they hitched them up very tight! Both brothers insisted upon harnessing the "roan" in the shafts, because "you kin let that critter full-tilt down hill";[1]—but Filoféi decided in favour of a very shaggy horse.—So the shaggy horse was put in the shafts.

They stuffed the tarantás full of hay, and thrust under the seat the lame horse's collar—in case it should prove necessary to fit it to the newly-purchased horse in Túla. . . . Filoféi, who had contrived to run home and return thence in a long, white peasant-coat which had belonged to his father, a tall conical cap, and oiled boots, clambered solemnly to the driver's box.—I took

[1] Russians drive at full speed down and up hills.—TRANSLATOR.

my seat, and looked at my watch:—it was a quarter past ten.—Ermolái did not even take leave of me, having set about thrashing his Valétka; Filoféi jerked the reins, shouted in an extremely shrill little voice: "Ekh, you tiny beasts!"—his brothers sprang up on each side, lashed the trace-horses under the belly, and the tarantás rolled off, and turned through the gate into the street. The shaggy horse made an attempt to dash to his place in the yard,—but Filoféi brought him to his senses by a few blows of his whip,—and we had soon left the village behind and were bowling along a tolerably level road, between dense thickets of nut-bushes.

The night was calm and magnificent, the most convenient sort for driving.

At times, the breeze would rustle among the bushes, rocking the branches; at times it would die away completely: but here and there in the sky motionless silvery clouds were visible; the moon rode high, brilliantly illuminating the countryside.—I stretched myself out on the hay, and was already beginning to fall into a doze . . . . . when the "bad stretch" suddenly recurred to my memory, and I started up.

"How now, Filoféi? Is it far to the ford?"

"To the ford, you say? It will be about eight versts."

"'Eight versts,'"—I thought to myself.—"We shall not get there under an hour.—I can

take a nap."—"Dost thou know the road well, Filoféi?"—I asked another question.

"Why, how could I help it, knowing the road? 'T is n't the first time I 've been over it."

He added something more, but I was no longer listening to him. . . . I was asleep.

WHAT aroused me was not my intention to awake precisely an hour later, as is often the case,—but a strange, though faint dragging through mud and gurgling directly under my ear.—I raised my head. . . .

What marvel was this?—I was lying, as before, in the tarantás; but around the tarantás,—and about fourteen inches—not more—from its rim, a watery expanse, lighted up by the moon, was dimpling and undulating in small, distinct ripples. I cast a glance ahead: on the box, with drooping head and bowed back, sat Filoféi, like a statue,—and further away still, over the purling water,—the curving line of the shaft-arch and the heads and backs of the horses were visible. —And everything was so motionless, so noiseless, —exactly as in the realm of enchantment: in a dream, a fantastic dream. . . . What did it mean?—I darted a glance backward from beneath the hood of the tarantás. . . . Why, we were in the very middle of the river . . . . the shores were more than thirty paces distant from us!

" Filoféi! "—I shouted.

" What? "—he replied.

" What dost thou mean by ' what '? Good gracious! Where are we? "

" In the river."

" I see that we are in the river.—But if we go on like this, we shall drown.—Dost mean to say that thou art traversing the ford in this manner? Hey?—Why, thou art fast asleep, Filoféi! Come, answer me! "

" I 've got a trifle astray,"—said my driver:—" I 've gone to one side, you know, more 's the pity; but now we must wait."

" What dost thou mean by ' must wait '?—What are we to wait for? "

" Why, here, let the shaggy horse look about him: wherever he turns, there the ford will be, you see, and we must drive in that direction."

I half sat up on the straw.—The head of the shaggy horse hung motionless over the water.—The only thing that could be seen by the clear light of the moon was, that one of its ears was moving backward and forward almost imperceptibly.

" Why, he 's fast asleep also, thy shaggy horse! "

" No,"—replied Filoféi:—" he 's sniffing the water now."

Again everything relapsed into silence, and, as

before, there was no sound save the purling of the water.—I also grew benumbed.

The moonlight, and the night, and the river, and we in it . . . .

"What 's that making such a hoarse sound?" —I asked Filoféi.

"That?—Ducklings in the reeds . . . . or snakes."

All at once the head of the shaft-horse began to shake, he pricked up his ears, he began to snort, and turned round. — "No-no-no-noo!" Filoféi suddenly roared at the top of his lungs, and, half-rising, he brandished his whip. The tarantás immediately moved from its stand, dashing forward at an angle across the current of the river—and advanced, quivering and swaying. . . . At first it seemed to me that we were sinking, plunging into the depths; but after two or three jolts and dives, the watery expanse seemed suddenly to grow shallower. . . . It kept sinking lower and lower, the tarantás kept rising higher and higher out of it,—lo! the wheels and the horses' tails had already made their appearance,—and now, with mighty and violent splashings, raising sheaves of diamonds,—no, not of diamonds, but of sapphires, which dispersed in the full gleam of the moon,—the horses dragged us cheerily and with a final effort on to the sandy shore, and proceeded along the road, up-hill, vying with each other in trotting along with their shining, wet hoofs.

"What will Filoféi say now?"—flashed through my mind: "'You see I was right!'—or something of that sort?" But he said nothing at all. Consequently, I did not consider it necessary to upbraid him for his lack of caution, and stretching myself out again upon the hay, I tried to get to sleep.

But I could not get to sleep, not because I was fatigued with hunting, and not because the trepidation I had undergone had driven slumber from me,—but probably because we were obliged to pass through very beautiful places. Now there were spacious, luxuriant, grassy water-meadows, with a multitude of small pools, lakes, brooks, creeks overgrown at their extremities with willows and vines, genuine Russian spots, beloved of the Russian folk, similar to those whither the heroes of our ancient epic songs [1] were wont to go to shoot white swans and grey ducks. The well-beaten road wound in a yellowish ribbon, the horses ran lightly—and I could not close an eye,—to such a degree was I admiring things! And all this glided past me so softly and sedately, beneath the friendly moon.—Even Filoféi was affected.

"Those are what are called among us the Saint-George meadows,"—he said, turning to me;—"and next come the Grand-Prince mea-

[1] See "The Epic Songs of Russia," by Isabel F. Hapgood. Charles Scribner's Sons.

dows; there are no other meadows like them in all Russia. . . . . They are very beautiful!"—The shaft-horse snorted and shook himself. . . . "Lord bless thee!" . . . . . said Filoféi, staidly and in an undertone.—"Are n't they beautiful!" he repeated, with a sigh, and then indulged in a prolonged groan. "The mowing-lands begin pretty soon, now, and what a lot of hay they get from them—an awful lot!—And there are quantities of fish in the creeks, too.—Such bream!"—he added in a drawl. "In a word: there is no need of dying from hunger!"

Suddenly he raised his hand.

"Ehva!—just look yonder! over yonder lake . . . . is n't it a heron standing there? can it be possible that it is catching fish by night? Ekh-ma! 't is a stump, not a heron. I was fooled that time! but the moon always deceives."

Thus did we drive on and on. . . . But now the meadows came to an end, small tracts of forest made their appearance, and tilled fields; a hamlet on one side twinkled with two or three lights,—not more than five versts remained to the highway.—I fell asleep.

Again I did not wake of my own accord. This time Filoféi's voice aroused me.

"Master . . . . hey, master!"

I raised myself on my elbow.—The tarantás was standing still on a level spot, in the very middle of the highway; turned round toward me on

the box, full face, with his eyes widely opened (I was even astonished, not having supposed that he had such large eyes), Filoféi whispered significantly and mysteriously:

"There 's a rattling! . . . . There 's a rattling!"

"What 's that thou 'rt saying?"

"I say there 's a rattling!—Just bend down and listen. Do you hear?"

I thrust my head out of the tarantás, and held my breath:—and, in fact, I did hear somewhere in the distance, far away from us, a faint, spasmodic rattling, as though of rumbling wheels.

"Do you hear?"—repeated Filoféi.

"Well, yes,"—I replied. "Some equipage is driving on the road."

"But you don't hear it . . . . . hist! There it is . . . . harness-bells . . . . . and a whistle too. . . . . Do you hear? Come, take off your cap . . . . . you will hear more distinctly."

I did not take off my cap, but lent an ear.—"Well, yes . . . . . perhaps I do.—But what of that?"

Filoféi turned his face toward his horses.

"A peasant-cart is rolling swiftly . . . . . unladen, the wheels have tires," he said, as he gathered up his reins.—"It means, master, that evil people are driving yonder; for here, in the vicinity of Túla, there 's a lot of . . . . . frolicking."

"What nonsense! Why dost thou assume that they must, infallibly, be wicked people?"

"I 'm telling you truly.—With bells . . . . and in an unladen cart. . . . Who can it be?"

"Well, and is it very far to Túla still?"

"It must be a good fifteen versts, and there 's not a sign of a dwelling."

"Well, then, drive on as rapidly as possible; we must make no delay."

Filoféi flourished his whip, and again the tarantás rolled on.

Although I did not believe Filoféi, still I could no longer sleep.—And what if, in reality . . . . ? An unpleasant sensation began to stir within me. —I sat up in the tarantás—up to that time I had been lying down—and began to gaze on all sides. While I had been asleep, a thin mist had gathered —not over the earth, but over the sky; it lay high up,—the moon hung in it like a whitish spot, as though veiled in crape. Everything had grown dull and confused, although below things were more visible.—All around lay flat, melancholy places; fields, and more fields, here and there a few bushes, ravines—and then more fields, and chiefly fallow land, with sparse, weedy grass. Empty . . . . dead! Not even a quail was calling.

We drove on for half an hour.—Filoféi was continually cracking his whip and chirruping

with his lips, but neither he nor I uttered a word. Now we ascended a hillock. . . . . Filoféi stopped the tróïka, and immediately said:

"There 's a rattling . . . . . a rattling, master!"

Again I hung out of the tarantás; but I might as well have remained under the hood, so clearly, though distinctly, was there now borne to my ears the sound of cart-wheels, men whistling, the jingling of the harness-bells, and the trampling of horses' hoofs; I even fancied I heard singing and laughter. The breeze, it is true, was blowing from that quarter, but there was no doubt of the fact that the unknown travellers had drawn nearer to us by a whole verst—possibly, even, by two versts.

Filoféi and I exchanged glances,—he merely moved his cap from the back of his head over his brow, and immediately, bending over the reins, began to lash the horses. They set out at a gallop, but could not keep up the pace long, and again dropped into a trot.—Filoféi continued to belabour them. We must make our escape!

I could not account to myself for the fact that this time I, who had not at first shared Filoféi's suspicions, had suddenly acquired the conviction that it was really evil-doers who were driving in pursuit of us. . . . I had heard nothing new: there were the same bells, there was the same rattling sound of an unloaded cart, the same whis-

tling, the same confused uproar. . . . But I now no longer cherished any doubt. . Filoféi could not be mistaken!

And thus twenty more minutes passed. . . . In the course of these last twenty minutes, athwart the rattling and rumbling of our own equipage, we could hear another rattling, another rumbling. . . .

"Halt, Filoféi!"—I said: "it makes no difference—there can be but one end to this?"

Filoféi uttered a faint-hearted "Whoa!" The horses stopped instantly, as though delighted at the possibility of taking a rest!

Good heavens! the bells were simply roaring behind our backs, the cart was thundering on with a rattle, men were whistling, shouting, and singing, the horses were neighing and pounding the earth with their hoofs. . . .

They had overtaken us!

"Ca-la-mee-ty!"—said Filoféi brokenly, in an undertone—and, with an irresolute chirrup, he began to urge on his horses. But at the same moment, something seemed suddenly to give way with a crash and a roar and a groan,—and a very large, broad peasant-cart, drawn by three emaciated horses, overtook us abruptly, like a whirlwind, dashed past us, and immediately slowed down to a walk, blocking the road.

"A regular brigand trick!"—whispered Filoféi.

I must admit that my heart began to beat wildly. . . . I began to stare intently into the semi-gloom of the moonlight veiled in vapours. In the cart, in front of us, half-sitting, half-lying, were six men in shirts, with their peasant-coats wide open on the breast; two of them were bare-headed; huge feet in boots dangled, jolting, over the rail; hands rose and fell at random . . . . . bodies heaved to and fro. . . . . It was plain that the whole gang was drunk. Some were yelling hoarsely whatever happened to come into their heads; one was whistling in a very clear and piercing manner, another was swearing; on the driver's seat sat a sort of giant in a short, sheepskin coat, driving. They drove on at a foot-pace, as though paying no attention to us.

What was to be done? We drove after them, also at a foot-pace.

For a quarter of a verst we proceeded in this manner.—Anticipation was torturing. . . . . What chance was there of saving ourselves, defending ourselves! There were six of them: and I had not even a stick with me! Should we turn back on our course?—but they would immediately overtake us. I recalled a verse of Zhukóvsky (where he is speaking of the murder of Field-Marshal Kámensky):

"The despised axe of the brigand . . ."

If not that, they would strangle us with a filthy rope . . . . and fling us into the ditch . . . . . and there we might rattle in the throat and struggle like a hare in a snare. . . . .

Ekh, we were in a bad plight!

But they continued to drive at a walk, as before, and pay no attention to us.

" Filoféi! "—I whispered,—" pray try to turn more to the right. Endeavour to pass them."

Filoféi made the attempt,—and turned out to the right . . . . but they immediately drove to the right also; . . . . evidently, it was impossible to pass them.

Filoféi tried again: he turned out to the left. . . . . But they did not let him pass on that side, either. They even burst out laughing. Which meant, that they would not let us pass.

" Regular brigands! "—whispered Filoféi to me over his shoulder.

" But what are they waiting for? "—I asked, also in a whisper.

" Why, yonder—ahead, in the ravine, over the stream—is a small bridge. . . . They 're going to attack us there! They always do like that . . . . near a bridge. We 're done for, master! "—he added, with a sigh:—" it is n't likely that they will release us alive; because the principal thing with them is—to hide all traces.—I 'm sorry for one thing, master: my tróïka-team will be lost, and my brothers will not get it! "

I was surprised that Filoféi could worry about his horses at such a moment,—and I must confess that I did not think much of him just then. . . . . " Is it possible that they will kill us? " I kept reiterating mentally.—" What for? I will give up to them everything I have about me. . . ."

And the bridge drew nearer and nearer, became more and more clearly visible.

Suddenly a sharp yell rang out, the tróïka in front of us seemed to soar into the air, dashed off, and having galloped to the bridge, came to an abrupt halt, as though rooted to the spot, a little to one side of the road. My heart fairly sank into my boots.

" Okh, brother Filoféi,"—said I:—" thou and I are driving to our death.—Forgive me, if I have destroyed thee."

" How is it thy fault, master! No one can escape his fate! Come on, shaggy, my faithful nag,"—said Filoféi, addressing the shaft-horse, —" go ahead, brother! Render us the last service! —All together now! . . . . . Lord, give us thy blessing! "

He launched his tróïka at a gentle trot.

We began to approach the bridge,—to approach that motionless, menacing cart. . . . All had grown silent in it, as though of set purpose. Not a sound was to be heard! Thus does the pike, the hawk, every beast of prey grow silent when its prey is approaching.—And now we came

alongside the cart. . . . . Suddenly the giant in the short sheepskin coat gave a great leap from it, and dashed straight at us!

Not a word did he say to Filoféi, but the latter immediately drew rein. . . . The tarantás came to a standstill.

The giant laid his hands on the carriage-door—and bending forward his shaggy head, and grinning broadly, he uttered the following words in a quiet, even voice, with the accent of a factory-hand:

"Respected sir, we are on our way from an honourable carouse, from a wedding-feast; we have been marrying off our fine young fellow, you know; we have just put the young pair to bed; we lads are all young, reckless,—we 've drunk a lot,—but there was n't enough for us to get drunk on;—so, will not you do us a favour, will not you contribute to us just the least little bit of money,—so that we may buy a dram of liquor for each brother of us?—We would drink your health, we would remember Your Stateliness;[1]—but if you will not do us the favour,—well, then, we beg that you will not be angry."

"What 's the meaning of this?"—I said to

[1] *Stepénstvo,* the title given by the populace to respected persons of their own and of the burgher class. In Siberia, Orenburg, and the Caucasus, the title is applied to Asiatic sultans, murzas, petty princes, and elders, while it is decreed by law to the Kirghiz sultans. But Khans are called "Your High-Stateliness."—TRANSLATOR.

myself. . . . "Is it raillery? . . . . Is he jeering at me?"

The giant continued to stand there, with bowed head. At that instant the moon emerged from the mist, and illuminated his face. It was smiling, was that face—both with eyes and lips. And no menace was perceptible in it . . . . . only, it seemed to be all alert . . . . . and his teeth were so white, and so large. . .

"I will contribute with pleasure. . . . . Here, take this. . . ." I said hastily—and drawing my purse from my pocket, I took from it two silver rubles: at that time, silver money was still current in Russia.—"Here, if this is enough."

"We 're very grateful!"—bawled the giant, in soldier fashion—and his thick fingers instantly snatched from me—not my whole purse—but only those two rubles. "We 're very grateful!"—He shook back his hair, and ran to the cart.

"My lads!"—he shouted: "The gentleman-traveller contributes two rubles to us!"—They all instantly began to yell. . . . . The giant clambered to the box. . . .

"May you be happy!" . . .

The horses started off, the cart thundered up hill,—once more it flashed through the dark streak which separated earth from heaven, sank into it, and vanished.

And now the rattling, and the shouting, and the bells were no longer to be heard. . . .

Deathlike silence reigned.

Filoféi and I did not speedily recover ourselves.

"Akh, curse thee, what a jester thou art!"—said Filoféi at last—and taking off his cap, he began to cross himself.—"Really, he is a joker,"—he added, and turned to me, all radiant with delight.—"But he must be a good man—really!—No-no-noo, my little ones! bestir yourselves!—You 're safe and sound! We 're all safe and sound!—That 's why he would n't let us pass; he was driving the horses. What a joker of a lad.—No-no-no-noo!—proceed, with God's blessing!"

I held my peace,—but I also felt relieved in soul. "We 're safe and sound!"—I repeated to myself, and stretched myself out on the hay.—"We got off cheaply!"

I even felt a little conscience-stricken at having recalled Zhukóvsky's lines.

All at once an idea occurred to me:

"Filoféi!"

"What?"

"Art thou married?"

"Yes."

"And hast thou children?"

"I have."

"How was it that thou didst not think of them?

Thou wert sorry about the horses—but not about thy wife and children?"

"But why should I feel sorry for them? They would n't have fallen into the hands of thieves, you see.—And I kept them in my thoughts all the while,—and I 'm keeping them there now . . . . so I am."—Filoféi stopped.—"Perhaps . . . . it was for their sakes that the Lord God had mercy on you and me."

"But supposing they were not brigands?"

"And how do we know?—Is it possible to crawl into another man's soul, I 'd like to know? —Another man's soul is . . . . darkness . . . everybody knows that. But 't is always better to have God's blessing.—No . . as for my family, I always . . . . Now-now-now, little ones, Go-d be with us!"

It was almost daybreak when we began to enter Túla. I was lying in the semi-forgetfulness of slumber. . . .

"Master,"—said Filoféi suddenly to me, "look yonder: there it stands, yonder by the dram-shop . . . . . their cart."

I raised my head . . . . it was they, in fact, and their cart, and their horses. On the threshold of the drinking-establishment the familiar giant in the short sheepskin coat suddenly made his appearance. "Sir!" he exclaimed, waving his cap, "We 're drinking up your money!—Well, and your coachman,"—he added, nodding his head

toward Filoféi,—" I fancy that fellow was pretty well scared,—was n't he? "

" A very jolly fellow,"—remarked Filoféi, when we had driven about twenty fathoms from the dram-shop.

We arrived in Túla at last; I bought the bird-shot, and wine and tea also, by the way,—and even took a horse from the horse-dealer.—At mid-day we set off on our return journey. As we drove past the spot where, for the first time, we had heard the rattling of the cart behind us, Filoféi, who had drunk considerable liquor in Túla, showed himself to be a very loquacious man,—he even narrated stories to me,—as we drove past that spot, Filoféi suddenly burst out laughing.

" But dost thou remember, master, how I kept saying to thee: ' There 's a rattling ' . . . . ' there 's a rattling,' I said . . . . ' there 's a rattling! ' "

He brandished his hand several times. . . . . These words struck him as very amusing.

That same evening we reached his village again.

I imparted our adventure to Ermolái. As he was sober, he expressed no sympathy, and merely grinned,—whether approvingly or reprovingly, is more than he himself knew, I suppose. But a couple of days later he informed me, with much satisfaction, that on that same night when Filoféi and I had driven to Túla,—and on that selfsame road,—a merchant had been robbed and mur-

dered. At first I did not believe this news; but afterward I was compelled to: the commissary of rural police confirmed its veracity to me, as he galloped by to the inquest.—Was it not from that " wedding-feast " that our bold lads were returning, and was not he that " dashing young fellow " whom, according to the expression of the giant-jester, they had " put to bed "? I remained for five days longer in Filoféi's village.—And on every occasion that I chanced to meet him, I said to him:—" Hey! There 's a rattling! "

" A jolly fellow,"—he replied to me every time, and began to laugh.

EPILOGUE

FOREST AND STEPPE

. . . . . .

. . . . And backward, gradually, longing him to draw
Began; to the country, to the dusky park,
Whose lindens are so vast, so dense with shade,
And lilies of the valley are so virginally sweet,
Where globe-shaped willows from the dam
In serried ranks over the water bend,
Where grows the luxuriant oak upon the luxuriant mead,
Where hemp and nettle their perfume emit . . . .
Thither, thither away, to the abundant fields,
Where, like unto velvet black the earth lies duskily,
Where,—turn your eyes whichever way you will,—
The rye streams gently on in billows soft,
And from behind transparent, round, white clouds
A heavy ray of yellow light falls down
So beautifully . . . .

(From a poem consigned to the flames.)

PERCHANCE, the reader is already bored with my memoirs; I hasten to reassure him with the promise to confine myself to the fragments which have been printed; but in taking my leave of him, I cannot refrain from saying a few words about hunting.

Hunting with gun and hound is very fine in itself, *für sich,* as people used to say in days of old; but, supposing you were not born a sportsman: nevertheless, you are a lover of nature; con-

sequently, you cannot but envy huntsmen like us. . . . Listen.

Do you know, for example, what a delight it is to sally forth in springtime before the dawn? You step out on the porch. . . . In the dark-blue sky stars are twinkling here and there; a damp breeze sweeps past, from time to time, in light gusts; the repressed, ill-defined whispering of the night is audible; the trees are rustling, as they stand enveloped in shadow. Now they lay a rug in the peasant-cart, and place a box with the samovár at your feet. The trace-horses fidget, neigh, and shift coquettishly from foot to foot; a pair of white geese, which have just waked up, waddle silently and slowly across the road. Beyond the wattled hedge, in the garden, the watchman is snoring peacefully; every sound seems to hang suspended in the chilly air,—to hang and not pass on. Now you have taken your seat; the horses have set off on the instant, the cart has begun to rattle loudly . . . . you drive on and on . . . . past the church, down-hill to the right, across the dam. . . . . The pond is barely beginning to smoke. You feel a little cold, you cover up your face with the collar of your cloak; you sink into a doze. The horses plash their hoofs sonorously through puddles; the coachman begins to whistle. But now, you have got four versts from home . . . . the rim of the sky is beginning to flush crimson; the daws scatter over

the birch-trees, flying awkwardly from tree to tree; the sparrows are chirping around the dark ricks. The air grows clearer, the road becomes visible, sleepy voices make themselves heard behind the gates. And in the meantime, the dawn is kindling; and lo, already golden streaks have flung themselves athwart the sky, the mists are swirling in the ravines; the larks are warbling loudly; the breeze which precedes the dawn has begun to blow,—and the crimson sun glides softly up. The light fairly gushes forth in a flood; your heart flutters within you, like a bird. All is bright, cheerful, agreeable! For a long distance round about everything is visible. There, behind the grove, lies a village; yonder, further away, is another, with a white church; yonder is a small birch-coppice, on the hill; behind it lies the marsh whither you are directing your course. . . . Faster, ye steeds, still faster! Advance at a smart trot! . . . . Only three versts remain, not more. The sun is rising swiftly; the sky is clear. . . . . The weather will be magnificent. A flock of sheep is advancing in a long line, from the village, to meet you. You have ascended the hill. . . . What a view! The river winds about for ten versts, gleaming dully blue through the mist; beyond it lie watery-green meadows; beyond the meadows are sloping hillocks; far away, lapwings are hovering and calling over the marsh; athwart the moist gleam diffused in the air, the distance

stands forth clearly . . . . not as in summer. How boldly the bosom heaves, how swiftly the limbs move, how strong the whole man becomes, thus seized in the embrace of the fresh breath of the spring! . . .

And the summer—July—morning! Who, save the sportsman, has experienced the joy of wandering at dawn among the bushes? The trace of your footsteps leaves a green line on the dewy, whitened grass. You thrust aside the wet bushes, —you are fairly drenched with the warm perfume which has accumulated over night; the air is all impregnated with the fresh bitterness of wormwood, the honey of buckwheat and clover; far away, like a wall, stands an oak forest, glittering and crimsoning in the sun; it is still chilly, but the approaching heat can be felt. The head swims with the excess of perfume. There is no end to the thicket. . . . Here and there, perchance, in the distance, the ripening rye gleams yellow, and the narrow strips of buckwheat shine with a reddish glint. Now a cart creaks; a peasant is making his way along at a foot-pace, to put his horse in the shade as soon as possible. . . . You have exchanged greetings with him, and have gone on, when the ringing whine of the scythe resounds behind you. The sun rides higher and higher. The grass will soon be dry. It is already hot. One hour passes, then another. . . . The sky grows dark along the rim; the motionless air

is blazing with stinging heat.—" Where can I get a drink, brother? "—you ask a mower.—" Yonder, in the ravine, is a well." You descend to the bottom of the ravine, through the dense hazel-bushes, all intertwined with tenacious grass. And, in fact, beneath the very cliff a spring is concealed; an oak-bush has eagerly thrown over the water its claw-like branches; great, silvery bubbles rise, dimpling, from the bottom covered with fine, velvety moss. You throw yourself down on the ground, you drink, but languor is beginning to stir within you. You are in the shade, you are inhaling the fragrant moisture, you are comfortable, while opposite you the bushes are getting red-hot, and seem to be turning yellow in the sun. But what is this? A breeze has suddenly flown up and dashed past; the surrounding air has quivered; is not that a clap of thunder? You emerge from the ravine . . . . what is yon leaden streak on the horizon? Is the sultry heat growing more intense? Is it a thunder-cloud coming up? . . . . But now comes a faint flash of lightning. . . . Eh, yes, it is a thunder-storm! The sun is still shining brilliantly round about you; it is still possible to hunt. But the cloud waxes: its front edge throws out a branch, it bends over into a vault. The grass, the bushes, everything round about has grown dark of a sudden. . . . Be quick! yonder, methinks, a hay-barn is visible . . . . be quick! . . . . . You have fled

to it, have entered. . . . What rain! what lightning! Here and there the water has dripped through upon the fragrant hay. . . . But now the sun has broken forth again. The thunderstorm has passed over; you step out. Heavens, how merrily everything round about is sparkling, how fresh and thin the air is, what a strong scent of strawberries and mushrooms is abroad! . . .

But now evening is drawing on. The sunset glow has embraced half the sky in its conflagration. The sun is setting. The air close at hand seems somehow peculiarly translucent, like glass; far away a soft mist is spreading, and is warm in aspect; along with the dew a crimson glow falls upon the fields, so recently flooded with streams of liquid gold; long shadows have begun to run out from the trees, from the bushes, from the lofty ricks of hay. . . . The sun has set; a star has kindled and is trembling in the fiery sea of the sunset. . . . Now it waxes pale; the sky grows blue; separate shadows disappear; the air is permeated with vapour. 'T is time to go home to the village, to the cottage where you are to spend the night. Throwing your gun over your shoulder, you walk briskly on, in spite of the distance. . . . And, in the meantime, night has come; you can no longer see twenty paces in front of you; the dogs are barely visible as white spots in the gloom; yonder, above the black bushes, the rim of the sky is confusedly perceptible. . . . . .

What is that?—a fire? . . . . No, it is the moon rising. And yonder, down below, to the right, the tiny lights of a village are twinkling. . . . Now, at last, you reach your cottage. Through the tiny window you descry the table, covered with a white cloth, a burning candle,—supper. . . .

Or you order your racing-drozhky to be harnessed up, and set out in quest of hazel-hens. 'T is jolly to make your way along the narrow path, between two walls of lofty rye. The ears slap you gently in the face, the corn-flowers cling about your feet, the quail utter their calls all around you, your horse runs on in a lazy trot. And now here is the forest. Shade and silence. The stately aspens are whispering high overhead; the long, pendent branches of the birch-trees are barely stirring; a mighty oak stands, like a warrior, by the side of a handsome linden. You drive along the green pathway flecked with shadows; huge yellow flies hang motionless in the golden air and suddenly fly away; gnats circle in a column, gleaming brightly in the shadow, darkling in the sunlight; birds warble peacefully. The golden voice of the hedge-sparrow rings with innocent, loquacious joy; it fits in with the perfume of the lilies of the valley. Further, further yet, into the depths of the forest. . . . The forest grows dense. . . . Inexpressible tranquillity falls upon the soul; and all round is so dreamy and quiet! But now a breeze has sprung up, and

the crests of the trees have begun to ripple, like falling waves. Here and there tall blades of grass are springing up through last year's brown foliage; mushrooms stand apart beneath their caps. A hare suddenly leaps out, a dog dashes in pursuit with a ringing bark. . . .

And how fine is the same forest in late autumn, when the woodcock are flying! They do not harbour in the very densest parts: they must be sought along the edges. There is no wind, there is neither sun, nor light, nor shadow, nor movement, nor noise; the autumnal scent, akin to the smell of wine, is disseminated through the soft air; a thin mist stands far off above the yellow fields. The motionless sky gleams peacefully white between the brown, naked branches of the trees; here and there on the lindens hang the last golden leaves. The damp earth is springy under foot; the tall, dry grass-blades do not stir; long threads glisten on the whitened grass. The breast rises and falls in quiet breathing, and a strange disquietude descends upon the soul. You stroll along the skirt of the forest, you glance at your dog, and, meanwhile, beloved images, beloved faces, both dead and living, come to mind, impressions long since sunk to sleep unexpectedly wake up; your imagination flutters and soars like a bird, and everything moves along and stands before the eyes so clearly. The heart suddenly begins to quiver and throb, dashes passion-

ately ahead, or is irrevocably submerged in memories. The whole of life unfolds lightly and swiftly, like a scroll; the man is in full possession of his past, his feelings, his whole soul. And nothing round about him hinders—there is no sun, no wind, no noise. . . .

And the clear, somewhat chilly autumnal day, which has been cold in early morning, when the birch, like a fabulous tree, all gold, is beautifully outlined against the pale-blue sky, when the low-hanging sun no longer warms, but shines more brilliantly than in summer, the small aspen grove is all glittering through and through, as though it found it a merry and easy thing to stand naked, the hoar-frost is still lying white on the bottom of the ravine, and the fresh breeze is softly stirring and driving along the fallen, withered leaves,—when blue waves dash gaily down the river, rocking the scattered geese in regular measure, and far away a mill is clattering, half-hidden by willows, and pigeons circle swiftly above it, flashing in motley hues through the bright air. . .

Beautiful also are the cloudy summer days, although the sportsman does not love them. On such days shooting is impossible: a bird, after fluttering up from under your very feet, instantly disappears in the whitish mist of the motionless haze. But how quiet, how inexpressibly quiet is everything around! Everything is awake, and everything is silent. You walk past a tree—it is

not rustling; it is taking its ease. A long streak lies blackly before you, spread out evenly in the air, like a thin vapour. You take it for the forest hard by; you approach—the forest turns into a tall bed of wormwood on the grass-strip between the tilled fields. Above you, around you,—everywhere, lies the mist. . . . But now the breeze is beginning to stir lightly.—A scrap of pale-blue sky stands forth confusedly through the thinning, smoke-like vapour, a golden-yellow ray of sunlight suddenly breaks forth, begins to stream in a long flood, beats upon the fields, rests upon the grove,—and now, everything is again shrouded in clouds. For a long time does this conflict last; but how unutterably magnificent and clear does the day become, when the light at last triumphs, and the last waves of heated mist roll away and spread out like a table-cloth, or wreathe about and vanish in the deep, tenderly-radiant heights of heaven! . . .

But now you have betaken yourself to the remote fields, to the steppes. You have driven ten versts along country roads,—and here, at last, is the highway. For a long, long time, you drive past endless trains of freight-wagons, past tiny posting-stations with a hissing samovár under the shed, wide-open gates and a well, from one church-village to another, through boundless fields, along green hemp-patches. Magpies flutter from willow to willow; peasant women, with

long rakes in their hands, roam about the fields; a wayfarer, in a threadbare nankeen kaftan, with a wallet on his back, trudges wearily along; the heavy carriage of a landed proprietor rolls smoothly toward you, drawn by six well-grown and broken-winded horses. From the window projects the corner of a pillow, and on the footboard, clinging to a cord, sits a footman sideways, wrapped in a cloak, and mud-bespattered to the very eyebrows. Here is a wretched little county town, with wooden houses all askew, interminable fences, uninhabited stone buildings belonging to merchants, and an ancient bridge over a deep ravine. . . . Further, further! . . . . The steppe regions have begun. You cast a glance from the crest of a hill—what a view! Round, low hillocks, ploughed and planted to their very summits, spread out in broad waves; ravines overgrown with bushes wind about between them; small groves are scattered about, like long islands; from village to village run narrow paths; churches gleam white; between the sides of the cliffs a little river glitters, traversed in four places by dams; far away in the fields bustards stand up prominently in goose file; an ancient manor-house, with its offices, its fruit-orchard and threshing-floor, is nestled down beside a tiny pond. But you drive further and further. The hills grow smaller and smaller, hardly a tree is to be

seen. Here it is, at last,—the boundless, limitless steppe! . . .

And on a winter day to roam among the tall snow-drifts in search of hares, to inhale the keen, frosty air, involuntarily to narrow the eyes from the dazzling, fine glitter of the soft snow, to admire the green hue of the sky above the reddish forest! . . . . And the first spring days, when everything round about is glittering and falling; athwart the heavy steam of the melting snow there is already an odour of the warming earth; on the thawed spots, beneath the slanting rays of the sun, the larks are warbling with confidence; and, with merry noise and roar, the floods gather from ravine to ravine. . . .

But it is time to end. By the way,—I have mentioned the spring: in spring it is easy to part, in spring the happy long to rove afar. . . . Farewell, reader: I wish you permanent good fortune.

A NOBLEMAN'S NEST

(1858)

A NOBLEMAN'S NEST

I

THE brilliant, spring day was inclining toward the evening, tiny rose-tinted cloudlets hung high in the heavens, and seemed not to be floating past, but retreating into the very depths of the azure.

In front of the open window of a handsome house, in one of the outlying streets of O * * * the capital of a Government, sat two women; one fifty years of age, the other seventy years old, and already aged.

The former was named Márya Dmítrievna Kalítin. Her husband, formerly the governmental procurator, well known in his day as an active official—a man of energetic and decided character, splenetic and stubborn—had died ten years previously. He had received a fairly good education, had studied at the university, but, having been born in a poverty-stricken class of society, he had early comprehended the necessity of opening up a way for himself, and of accumulating money. Márya Dmítrievna had married

him for love; he was far from uncomely in appearance, he was clever, and, when he chose, he could be very amiable. Márya Dmítrievna (her maiden name had been Péstoff) had lost her parents in early childhood, had spent several years in Moscow, in a government educational institute, and, on returning thence, had lived fifty versts from O * * *, in her native village, Pokróvskoe, with her aunt and her elder brother. This brother soon removed to Petersburg on service, and kept his sister and his aunt on short commons, until his sudden death put an end to his career. Márya Dmítrievna inherited Pokróvskoe, but did not live there long; during the second year after her marriage to Kalítin, who succeeded in conquering her heart in the course of a few days, Pokróvskoe was exchanged for another estate, much more profitable, but ugly and without a manor-house, and, at the same time, Kalítin acquired a house in the town of O * * *, and settled down there permanently with his wife. A large garden was attached to the house; on one side, it joined directly on to the open fields, beyond the town. Kalítin,—who greatly disliked the stagnation of the country,—had evidently made up his mind, that there was no reason for dragging out existence on the estate. Márya Dmítrievna, many a time, in her own mind regretted her pretty Pokróvskoe, with its merry little stream, its broad meadows, and verdant groves; but she opposed

her husband in nothing, and worshipped his cleverness and knowledge of the world. But when, after fifteen years of married life, he died, leaving a son and two daughters, Márya Dmítrievna had become so wonted to her house, and to town life, that she herself did not wish to leave O * * *.

In her youth, Márya Dmítrievna had enjoyed the reputation of being a pretty blonde, and at the age of fifty her features were not devoid of attraction, although they had become somewhat swollen and indefinite in outline. She was more sentimental than kind, and even in her mature age she had preserved the habits of her school-days; she indulged herself, was easily irritated, and even wept when her ways were interfered with; on the other hand, she was very affectionate and amiable, when all her wishes were complied with, and when no one contradicted her. Her house was one of the most agreeable in the town. Her fortune was very considerable, not so much her inherited fortune, as that acquired by her husband. Both her daughters lived with her; her son was being educated at one of the best government institutions in Petersburg.

The old woman, who was sitting by the window with Márya Dmítrievna, was that same aunt, her father's sister, with whom she had spent several years, in days gone by, at Pokróvskoe. Her name was Márfa Timoféevna Péstoff. She bore the reputation of being eccentric, had an independent

character, told the entire truth to every one, straight in the face, and, with the most scanty resources, bore herself as though she possessed thousands. She had not been able to endure the deceased Kalítin, and as soon as her niece married him, she retired to her tiny estate, where she lived for ten whole years in the hen-house of a peasant. Márya Dmítrievna was afraid of her. Black-haired and brisk-eyed even in her old age, tiny, sharp-nosed Márfa Timoféevna walked quickly, held herself upright, and talked rapidly and intelligibly, in a shrill, ringing voice. She always wore a white cap and a white jacket.

"What art thou doing that for?—" she suddenly inquired of Márya Dmítrievna.—"What art thou sighing about, my mother?"

"Because," said the other.—"What wonderfully beautiful clouds!"

"So, thou art sorry for them, is that it?"

Márya Dmítrievna made no reply.

"Is n't that Gedeónovsky coming yonder?"—said Márfa Timoféevna, briskly moving her knitting-needles (she was knitting a huge, motley-hued scarf). "He might keep thee company in sighing,—or, if not, he might tell us some lie or other."

"How harshly thou always speakest about him! Sergyéi Petróvitch is an—estimable man."

"Estimable!" repeated the old woman reproachfully.

"And how devoted he was to my dead husband!" remarked Márya Dmítrievna;—"to this day, I cannot think of it with indifference."

"I should think not! he pulled him out of the mire by his ears,"—growled Márfa Timoféevna, and her knitting-needles moved still more swiftly in her hands.

"He looks like such a meek creature,"—she began again,—"his head is all grey, but no sooner does he open his mouth, than he lies or calumniates. And he's a State Councillor, to boot! Well, he's a priest's son: and there's nothing more to be said!"

"Who is without sin, aunty? Of course, he has that weakness. Sergyéi Petróvitch received no education,—of course he does not speak French; but, say what you will, he is an agreeable man."

"Yes, he's always licking thy hand. He does n't talk French,—what a calamity! I 'm not strong on the French 'dialect' myself. 'T would be better if he did not speak any language at all: then he would n't lie. But there he is, by the way—speak of the devil,—" added Márfa Timoféevna, glancing into the street.—"There he strides, thine agreeable man. What a long-legged fellow, just like a stork."

Márya Dmítrievna adjusted her curls. Márfa Timoféevna watched her with a grin.

"Hast thou not a grey hair there, my mother?

Thou shouldst scold thy Paláshka. Why does n't she see it?"

"Oh, aunty, you're always so . . ." muttered Márya Dmítrievna, with vexation, and drummed on the arm of her chair with her fingers.

"Sergyéi Petróvitch Gedeónovsky!" squeaked a red-cheeked page-lad, springing in through the door.

II

THERE entered a man of lofty stature, in a neat coat, short trousers, grey chamois-skin gloves, and two neckties—one black, on top, and the other white, underneath. Everything about him exhaled decorum and propriety, beginning with his good-looking face and smoothly brushed temple-curls, and ending with his boots, which had neither heels nor squeak. He bowed first to the mistress of the house, then to Márfa Timoféevna, and slowly drawing off his gloves, took Márya Dmítrievna's hand. After kissing it twice in succession, with respect, he seated himself, without haste, in an arm-chair, and said with a smile, as he rubbed the very tips of his fingers:

"And is Elizavéta Mikhaílovna well?"

"Yes,"—replied Márya Dmítrievna,—"she is in the garden."

"And Eléna Mikhaílovna?"

"Lyénotchka is in the garden also. Is there anything new?"

"How could there fail to be, ma'am, how could there fail to be,"—returned the visitor, slowly blinking his eyes, and protruding his lips. "Hm!

. . . now, here 's a bit of news, if you please, and a very astounding bit: Lavrétzky, Feódor Iványitch, has arrived."

" Fédya? "—exclaimed Márfa Timoféevna. —" But come now, my father, art not thou inventing that? "

" Not in the least, ma'am, I saw him myself."

" Well, that 's no proof."

" He has recovered his health finely,"—went on Gedeónovsky, pretending not to hear Márfa Timoféevna's remark:—" he has grown broader in the shoulders, and the rosy colour covers the whole of his cheeks."

" He has recovered his health,"—ejaculated Márya Dmítrievna, with pauses:—" that means, that he had something to recover from? "

" Yes, ma'am,"—returned Gedeónovsky:— " Any other man, in his place, would have been ashamed to show himself in the world."

" Why so? "—interrupted Márfa Timoféevna; —" what nonsense is this? A man returns to his native place—what would you have him do with himself? And as if he were in any way to blame!"

" The husband is always to blame, madam, I venture to assure you, when the wife behaves badly."

" Thou sayest that, my good sir, because thou hast never been married thyself." Gedeónovsky smiled in a constrained way.

" Permit me to inquire," he asked, after a brief

pause,—" for whom is that very pretty scarf destined? "

Márfa Timoféevna cast a swift glance at him.

" It is destined "—she retorted,—" for the man who never gossips, nor uses craft, nor lies, if such a man exists in the world. I know Fédya well; his sole fault is, that he was too indulgent to his wife. Well, he married for love, and nothing good ever comes of those love-marriages,"—added the old woman, casting a sidelong glance at Márya Dmítrievna, and rising.—"And now, dear little father, thou mayest whet thy teeth on whomsoever thou wilt, only not on me; I 'm going away, I won't interfere."—And Márfa Timoféevna withdrew.

" There, she is always like that,"—said Márya Dmítrievna, following her aunt with her eyes:—" Always! "

" It 's her age! There 's no help for it, ma'am!" remarked Gedeónovsky.—" There now, she permitted herself to say: ' the man who does not use craft.' But who does n't use craft nowadays? it 's the spirit of the age. One of my friends, a very estimable person, and, I must tell you, a man of no mean rank, was wont to say: that ' nowadays, a hen approaches a grain of corn craftily —she keeps watching her chance to get to it from one side.' But when I look at you, my lady, you have a truly angelic disposition; please to favour me with your snow-white little hand."

Márya Dmítrievna smiled faintly, and extended her plump hand, with the little finger standing out apart, to Gedeónovsky. He applied his lips to it, and she moved her arm-chair closer to him, and bending slightly toward him, she asked in a low tone:

"So, you have seen him? Is he really—all right, well, cheerful?"

"He is cheerful, ma'am; all right, ma'am," returned Gedeónovsky, in a whisper.

"And you have not heard where his wife is now?"

"She has recently been in Paris, ma'am; now, I hear, she has removed to the kingdom of Italy."

"It is dreadful, really,—Fédya's position; I do not know how he can endure it. Accidents do happen, with every one, in fact; but he, one may say, has been advertised all over Europe."

Gedeónovsky sighed.

"Yes, ma'am; yes, ma'am. Why, she, they say, has struck up acquaintance with artists, and pianists, and, as they call it in their fashion, with lions and wild beasts. She has lost her shame, completely. . ."

"It is very, very sad,"—said Márya Dmítrievna:—"on account of the relationship; for you know, Sergyéi Petróvitch, he 's my nephew, once removed."

"Of course, ma'am; of course, ma'am. How could I fail to be aware of everything which

relates to your family? Upon my word, ma'am!"

"Will he come to see us,—what do you think?"

"We must assume that he will, ma'am; but I hear, that he is going to his country estate."

Márya Dmítrievna cast her eyes heavenward.

"Akh, Sergyéi Petróvitch, when I think of it, how circumspectly we women must behave!"

"There are different sorts of women, Márya Dmítrievna. Unfortunately, there are some of fickle character . . . well, and it 's a question of age, also; then, again, the rules have not been inculcated in their childhood." (Sergyéi Petróvitch pulled a checked blue handkerchief out of his pocket, and began to unfold it).—"Such women exist, of course," (Sergyéi Petróvitch raised a corner of the handkerchief to his eyes, one after the other),—"but, generally speaking, if we take into consideration, that is . . . There is an unusual amount of dust in town," he concluded.

"*Maman, maman*"—screamed a pretty little girl of eleven, as she rushed into the room:—"Vladímir Nikoláitch is coming to our house on horseback!"

Márya Dmítrievna rose; Sergyéi Petróvitch also rose and bowed:—"Our most humble salute to Eléna Mikhaílovna," he said, and withdrawing into a corner, out of propriety, he began to blow his long and regularly-formed nose.

"What a splendid horse he has!—" went on the little girl.—"He was at the gate just now, and told Liza and me, that he would ride up to the porch."

The trampling of hoofs became audible; and a stately horseman, on a fine brown steed, made his appearance in the street, and halted in front of the open window.

III

"Good afternoon, Márya Dmítrievna!"—exclaimed the horseman, in a ringing, agreeable voice.—"How do you like my new purchase?"

Márya Dmítrievna went to the window.

"Good afternoon, *Woldemar!* Akh, what a magnificent horse! From whom did you buy it?"

"From the remount officer. . . He asked a high price, the robber!"

"What is its name?"

"Orlando. . . . But that's a stupid name; I want to change it. . . *Eh bien, eh bien, mon garçon.* . . What a turbulent beast!" The horse snorted, shifted from foot to foot, and tossed his foaming muzzle.

"Pat him, Lénotchka, have no fears. . ."

The little girl stretched her hand out of the window, but Orlando suddenly reared up, and leaped aside. The rider did not lose control, gripped the horse with his knees, gave him a lash on the neck with his whip, and, despite his opposition, placed him once more in front of the window.

"Prenez garde! prenez garde!"—Márya Dmítrievna kept repeating.

"Pat him, Lyénotchka,"—returned the rider,—"I will not permit him to be wilful."

Again the little girl stretched forth her hand, and timidly touched the quivering nostrils of Orlando, who trembled incessantly and strained at the bit.

"Bravo!"—exclaimed Márya Dmítrievna,—"and now, dismount, and come in."

The horseman turned his steed round adroitly, gave him the spurs, and after dashing along the street at a brisk gallop, rode into the yard. A minute later, he ran in through the door of the anteroom into the drawing-room, flourishing his whip; at the same moment, on the threshold of another door, a tall, graceful, black-haired girl of nineteen—Márya Dmítrievna's eldest daughter, Liza—made her appearance.

IV

The young man, with whom we have just made the reader acquainted, was named Vladímir Nikoláitch Pánshin. He served in Petersburg, as an official for special commissions, in the Ministry of the Interior. He had come to the town of O * * * to execute a temporary governmental commission, and was under the command of Governor-General Zonnenberg, to whom he was distantly related. Pánshin's father, a staff-captain of cavalry on the retired list, a famous gambler, a man with a crumpled visage and a nervous twitching of the lips, had passed his whole life in the society of people of quality, had frequented the English Clubs in both capitals, and bore the reputation of an adroit, not very trustworthy, but charming and jolly fellow. In spite of his adroitness, he found himself almost constantly on the very verge of indigence, and left behind him to his only son a small and impaired fortune. On the other hand, he had, after his own fashion, taken pains with his education: Vladímir Nikoláitch spoke French capitally, English well, and German badly; but it is permissible to let fall a German word in certain circumstances—chiefly

humorous,—"*c'est même très chic,*" as the Petersburg Parisians express themselves. Vladímir Nikoláitch already understood, at the age of fifteen, how to enter any drawing-room whatever without embarrassment, how to move about in it agreeably, and to withdraw at the proper time. Pánshin's father had procured for his son many influential connections; as he shuffled the cards between two rubbers, or after a successful capture of all the tricks, he let slip no opportunity to drop a nice little word about his " Volódka " to some important personage who was fond of social games. On his side, Vladímir Nikoláitch, during his stay in the university, whence he emerged with the rank of actual student, made acquaintance with several young men of quality, and became a frequenter of the best houses. He was received gladly everywhere; he was extremely good-looking, easy in his manners, entertaining, always well and ready for everything; where it was requisite, he was respectful; where it was possible, he was insolent, a capital companion, *un charmant garçon.* The sacred realm opened out before him. Pánshin speedily grasped the secret of the science of society; he understood how to imbue himself with genuine respect for its decrees; he understood how, with half-bantering gravity, to busy himself with nonsense and assume the appearance of regarding everything serious as trivial; he danced exquisitely, he dressed in English style.

In a short time he became renowned as one of the most agreeable and adroit young men in Petersburg. Pánshin was, in reality, very adroit,—no less so than his father: but he was, also, very gifted. He could do everything: he sang prettily, he drew dashingly, he wrote verses, he acted very far from badly on the stage. He had only just passed his twenty-eighth birthday, but he was already Junior Gentleman of the Emperor's bedchamber, and had a very tolerable rank. Pánshin firmly believed in himself, in his brains, in his penetration; he advanced boldly and cheerfully, at full swing; his life flowed along as on oil. He was accustomed to please everybody, old and young, and imagined that he was a judge of people, especially of women: he did know well their everyday weaknesses. As a man not a stranger to art, he felt within him both fervour, and some enthusiasm, and rapture, and in consequence of this he permitted himself various deviations from the rules: he caroused, he picked up acquaintance with persons who did not belong to society, and, in general, maintained a frank and simple demeanour; but in soul he was cold and cunning, and in the midst of the wildest carouse his clever little brown eye was always on guard, and watching; this bold, this free young man could never forget himself and get completely carried away. To his honour it must be said, that he never bragged of his conquests. He had hit upon Márya Dmí-

trievna's house immediately on his arrival in O * * *, and had promptly made himself entirely at home there. Márya Dmítrievna fairly adored him.

Pánshin amiably saluted all who were in the room, shook hands with Márya Dmítrievna and Lizavéta Mikhaílovna, lightly tapped Gedeónovsky on the shoulder, and whirling round on his heels, caught Lyénotchka by the head, and kissed her on the brow.

"And you are not afraid to ride such a vicious horse?"—Márya Dmítrievna asked him.

"Good gracious! it is a very peaceable beast; but I 'll tell you what I am afraid of: I 'm afraid to play preference with Sergyéi Petróvitch; last night, at the Byelenítzyns', he won my last farthing."

Gedeónovsky laughed a shrill and servile laugh: he fawned on the brilliant young official from Petersburg, the pet of the governor. In his conversations with Márya Dmítrievna, he frequently alluded to Pánshin's remarkable capacities. "For why should not I praise him?" he argued. "The young man is making a success in the highest sphere of life, discharges his service in an exemplary manner, and is not the least bit proud." Moreover, even in Petersburg Pánshin was considered an energetic official: he got through an immense amount of work; he alluded to it jestingly, as is befitting a fashionable man

who attaches no particular importance to his labours, but he was "an executor." The higher officials love such subordinates; he never had the slightest doubt himself, that, if he so wished, he could become a Minister in course of time.

"You are pleased to say that I beat you at cards,"—remarked Gedeónovsky:—"but who was it that won twelve rubles from me last week? and besides . . . ."

"Villain, villain," Pánshin interrupted him, with a caressing but almost disdainful carelessness, and without paying any further attention to him, he stepped up to Liza.

"I have not been able to find the overture of 'Oberon' here," he began:—"Mme. Byelenítzyn was merely boasting, that she had all the classical music,—as a matter of fact, she has nothing except polkas and waltzes; but I have already written to Moscow, and within a week I shall have that overture. By the way,"—he continued,—"I wrote a new romance yesterday; the words also are my own. Would you like to have me sing it for you? I do not know how it has turned out; Mme. Byelenítzyn thought it extremely charming, but her words signify nothing,—I wish to know your opinion. However, I think it will be better later on. . . . . ."

"Why later on?"—interposed Márya Dmítrievna:—"Why not now?"

"I obey, ma'am,"—said Pánshin, with a cer-

tain bright, sweet smile, which was wont to appear on his face, and suddenly to vanish,—pushed forward a chair with his knee, seated himself at the piano, and after striking several chords, he began to sing, clearly enunciating the words, the following romance:

The moon floats high above the earth
  Amid the clouds so pale;
But from the crest of the sea surge moveth
  A magic ray.
The sea of my soul hath acknowledged thee
  To be its moon,
And 't is moved,—in joy and in sorrow,—
  By thee alone.
With the anguish of love, the anguish of dumb aspirations,
  The soul is full;
I suffer pain. . . But thou from agitation art as free
  As that moon.

Pánshin sang the second couplet with peculiar expression and force; the surging of the waves could be heard in the tempestuous accompaniment. After the words: "I suffer pain. . ." he heaved a slight sigh, dropped his eyes, and lowered his voice,—*morendo*. When he had finished, Liza praised the motive, Márya Dmítrievna said: "It is charming;"—while Gedeónovsky even shouted: "Ravishing! both poetry and harmony are equally ravishing! . . . " Lyénotchka, with

childish adoration, gazed at the singer. In a word, the composition of the youthful dilettante pleased all present extremely; but outside of the door of the drawing-room, in the anteroom, stood an elderly man, who had just arrived, to whom, judging by the expression of his downcast face and the movement of his shoulders, Pánshin's romance, charming as it was, afforded no pleasure. After waiting a while, and whisking the dust from his boots with a coarse handkerchief, this man suddenly screwed up his eyes, pressed his lips together grimly, bent his back, which was already sufficiently bowed without that, and slowly entered the drawing-room.

"Ah! Christofór Feódoritch, good afternoon!"—Pánshin was the first of all to exclaim, and sprang hastily from his seat.—"I had no suspicion that you were here,—I could not, on any account, have made up my mind to sing my romance in your presence. I know that you do not care for frivolous music."

"I vas not listening," remarked the newcomer, in imperfect Russian, and having saluted all, he remained awkwardly standing in the middle of the room.

"Have you come, Monsieur Lemm,"—said Márya Dmítrievna,—"to give a music lesson to Liza?"

"No, not to Lisaféta Mikhaílovna, but to Eléna Mikhaílovna."

"Ah! Well,—very good. Lyénotchka, go upstairs with Monsieur Lemm."

The old man was on the point of following the little girl, but Pánshin stopped him.

"Do not go away after the lesson, Christofór Feódoritch,"— he said:—"Lizavéta Mikhaílovna and I will play a Beethoven sonata for four hands."

The old man muttered something, but Pánshin went on in German, pronouncing his words badly:

"Lizavéta Mikhaílovna has shown me the spiritual cantata which you presented to her—'t is a very fine thing! Please do not think that I am incapable of appreciating serious music,—quite the contrary: it is sometimes tiresome, but, on the other hand, it is very beneficial."

The old man crimsoned to his very ears, cast a sidelong glance at Liza, and hastily left the room.

Márya Dmítrievna requested Pánshin to repeat the romance; but he declared, that he did not wish to wound the ears of the learned German, and proposed to Liza that they should occupy themselves with the Beethoven sonata. Then Márya Dmítrievna sighed, and in her turn, proposed to Gedeónovsky that he should take a stroll in the garden with her.—"I wish,"—she said, "to talk and take counsel with you still further, over our poor Fédya." Gedeónovsky grinned, bowed, took up—with two fingers, his

hat, and his gloves neatly laid on its brim, and withdrew, in company with Márya Dmítrievna. Pánshin and Liza were left alone in the room; she fetched the sonata, and opened it; both seated themselves, in silence, at the piano.—From above, the faint sounds of scales, played by Lyénotchka's uncertain little fingers, were wafted to them.

V

Christopher-Theodore-Gottlieb Lemm was born in the year 1786, in the kingdom of Saxony, in the town of Chemnitz, of poor musicians. His father played the French horn, his mother the harp; he himself, at the age of five, was already practising on three different instruments. At eight years of age he became an orphan, and at the age of ten he began to earn a bit of bread for himself by his art. For a long time he led a wandering life, played everywhere—in inns, at fairs, and at peasant weddings and at balls; at last, he got into an orchestra, and rising ever higher and higher, he attained to the post of director. He was rather a poor executant; but he possessed a thorough knowledge of music. At the age of twenty-eight he removed to Russia. He was imported by a great gentleman, who himself could not endure music, but maintained an orchestra as a matter of pride. Lemm lived seven years with him, in the capacity of musical conductor, and left him with empty hands; the gentleman was ruined, and wished to give him a note of hand, but afterward refused him even this,—in a word, did not pay him a farthing. People advised him

to leave the country: but he was not willing to return home in poverty from Russia, from great Russia, that gold-mine of artists; he decided to remain, and try his luck. For the space of twenty years he did try his luck: he sojourned with various gentry, he lived in Moscow and in the capitals of various governments, he suffered and endured a great deal, he learned to know want, he floundered like a fish on the ice; but the idea of returning to his native land never abandoned him in the midst of all these calamities to which he was subjected; it alone upheld him. But it did not suit Fate to render him happy with this last and first joy: at the age of fifty, ill, prematurely infirm, he got stranded in the town of O * * * and there remained for good, having finally lost all hope of quitting the Russia which he detested, and managing, after a fashion, to support his scanty existence by giving lessons. Lemm's external appearance did not predispose one in his favour. He was small of stature, round-shouldered, with shoulder-blades which projected crookedly, and a hollow chest, with huge, flat feet, with pale-blue nails on the stiff, unbending fingers of his sinewy, red hands; he had a wrinkled face, sunken cheeks, and tightly-compressed lips, that he was incessantly moving as though chewing, which, added to his customary taciturnity, produced an almost malevolent impression; his grey hair hung in elf-locks over his

low brow; his tiny, motionless eyes smouldered like coals which had just been extinguished; he walked heavily, swaying his clumsy body from side to side at every step. Some of his movements were suggestive of the awkward manner in which an owl in a cage plumes itself when it is conscious that it is being watched, though it itself hardly sees anything with its huge, yellow, timorously and dozily blinking eyes. Confirmed, inexorable grief had laid upon the poor musician its ineffaceable seal, had distorted and disfigured his already ill-favoured figure; but for any one who knew enough not to stop at first impressions, something unusual was visible in this half-wrecked being. A worshipper of Bach and Handel, an expert in his profession, gifted with a lively imagination, and with that audacity of thought which is accessible only to the German race, Lemm, in course of time—who knows?—might have entered the ranks of the great composers of his native land, if life had led him differently; but he had not been born under a fortunate star! He had written a great deal in his day—and he had not succeeded in seeing a single one of his compositions published; he had not understood how to set about the matter in the proper way, to cringe opportunely, to bustle at the right moment. Once, long, long ago, one of his admirers and friends, also a German and also poor, had published two of his sonatas at

his own expense,—and the whole edition remained in the cellars of the musical shops; they had vanished dully, without leaving a trace, as though some one had flung them into the river by night. At last Lemm gave up in despair; moreover, his years were making themselves felt: he had begun to grow rigid, to stiffen, as his fingers stiffened also. Alone, with an aged cook, whom he had taken from the almshouse (he had never been married), he lived on in O * * *, in a tiny house, not far from the Kalítin residence; he walked a great deal, read the Bible and collections of Protestant psalms, and Shakespeare in Schlegel's translation. It was long since he had composed anything; but, evidently, Liza, his best pupil, understood how to arouse him: he had written for her the cantata to which Pánshin had alluded. He had taken the words for this cantata from the psalms; several verses he had composed himself; it was to be sung by two choruses,—the chorus of the happy, and the chorus of the unhappy; both became reconciled, in the end, and sang together: "O merciful God, have mercy upon us sinners, and purge out of us by fire all evil thoughts and earthly hopes!"—On the title-page, very carefully written, and even drawn, stood the following: "Only the Just are Right. A Spiritual Cantata. Composed and dedicated to Miss Elizavéta Kalítin, my beloved pupil, by her teacher, C. T. G. Lemm." The words:

"Only the Just are Right," and "Elizavéta Kalítin," were surrounded by rays. Below was added: "For you alone,"—"Für Sie allein."—Therefore Lemm had crimsoned and had cast a sidelong glance at Liza; it pained him greatly when Pánshin spoke of his cantata in his presence.

VI

PÁNSHIN struck the opening chords of the sonata loudly, and with decision (he was playing the second hand), but Liza did not begin her part. He stopped, and looked at her. Liza's eyes, fixed straight upon him, expressed displeasure; her lips were not smiling, her whole face was stern, almost sad.

"What is the matter with you?"—he inquired.

"Why did not you keep your word?" said she. —"I showed you Christofór Feódoritch's cantata on condition that you would not mention it to him."

"Pardon me, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna, it was a slip of the tongue."

"You have wounded him—and me also. Now he will not trust me any more."

"What would you have me do, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna! From my earliest childhood, I have never been able to endure the sight of a German: something simply impels me to stir him up."

"Why do you say that, Vladímir Nikoláitch! This German is a poor, solitary, broken man—and you feel no pity for him? You want to stir him up?"

Pánshin was disconcerted.

"You are right, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna,"—he said. "My eternal thoughtlessness is responsible for the whole thing. No, do not say a word; I know myself well. My thoughtlessness has done me many an ill turn. Thanks to it, I have won the reputation of an egoist."

Pánshin paused for a moment. No matter how he began a conversation, he habitually wound up by speaking of himself, and he did it in a charming, soft, confidential, almost involuntary way.

"And here in your house,"—he went on:—"your mother likes me, of course,—she is so kind; you . . . however, I do not know your opinion of me; but your aunt, on the contrary, cannot bear me. I must have offended her, also, by some thoughtless, stupid remark. For she does not like me, does she?"

"No," said Liza, with some hesitation:—"you do not please her."

Pánshin swept his fingers swiftly over the keys; a barely perceptible smile flitted across his lips.

"Well, and you?"—he said:—"Do I seem an egoist to you also?"

"I know you very slightly,"—returned Liza:—"but I do not consider you an egoist; on the contrary, I ought to feel grateful to you. . . ."

"I know, I know, what you mean to say,"—Pánshin interrupted her, and again ran his fin-

gers over the keys:—" for the music, for the books which I bring you, for the bad drawings with which I decorate your album, and so forth and so on. I can do all that—and still be an egoist. I venture to think, that you are not bored in my company, and that you do not regard me as a bad man, but still you assume, that I—how in the world shall I express it?—would not spare my own father or friend for the sake of a jest."

" You are heedless and forgetful, like all worldly people,"—said Liza:—" that is all."

Pánshin frowned slightly.

" Listen," he said:—" let us not talk any more about me; let us play our sonata. One thing only I will ask of you,"—he said, as with his hand he smoothed out the leaves of the bound volume which stood on the music-rack:—" think what you will of me, call me an egoist even,—so be it! but do not call me a worldly man: that appellation is intolerable to me. . . . *Anch'io son pittore.* I also am an artist,—and I will immediately prove it to you in action. Let us begin."

" We will begin, if you please,"—said Liza.

The first adagio went quite successfully, although Pánshin made more than one mistake. He played his own compositions and those which he had practised very prettily, but he read music badly. On the other hand, the second part of the sonata—a rather brisk allegro—did not go at all: at the twentieth measure, Pánshin, who had got

two measures behind, could hold out no longer, and pushed back his chair with a laugh.

"No!"—he exclaimed:—"I cannot play to-day; it is well that Lemm does not hear us: he would fall down in a swoon."

Liza rose, shut the piano, and turned to Pánshin.

"What shall we do now?"—she asked.

"I recognise you in that question! You cannot possibly sit with folded hands. Come, if you like, let us draw, before it has grown completely dark. Perhaps the other muse,—the muse of drawing . . . . what 's her name? I 've forgotten . . . . will be more gracious to me. Where is your album? Do you remember?—my landscape there is not finished."

Liza went into the next room for her album, and Pánshin, when he was left alone, pulled a batiste handkerchief from his pocket, polished his nails, and gazed somewhat askance at his hands. They were very handsome and white; on the thumb of the left hand he wore a spiral gold ring. Liza returned; Pánshin seated himself near the window, and opened the album.

"Aha!"—he exclaimed:—"I see that you have begun to copy my landscape—and that is fine. Very good! Only here—give me a pencil—the shadows are not put on thickly enough. . . . Look."

And Pánshin, with a bold sweep, prolonged

several long strokes. He constantly drew one and the same landscape: in the foreground were large, dishevelled trees, in the distance, a meadow, and saw-toothed mountains on the horizon. Liza looked over his shoulder at his work.

"In drawing, and in life in general,"—said Pánshin, bending his head now to the right, now to the left:—"lightness and boldness are the principal thing."

At that moment, Lemm entered the room, and, with a curt inclination, was on the point of departing; but Pánshin flung aside the album and pencil, and barred his way.

"Whither are you going, my dear Christofór Feódoritch? Are not you going to stay and drink tea?"

"I must go home,"—said Lemm in a surly voice:—"my head aches."

"Come, what nonsense!—stay. You and I will have a dispute over Shakespeare."

"My head aches,"—repeated the old man.

"We tried to play a Beethoven sonata without you,"—went on Pánshin, amiably encircling his waist with his arm, and smiling brightly:—"but we could n't make it go at all. Just imagine, I could n't play two notes in succession correctly."

"You vould haf done better to sing your romantz,"—retorted Lemm, pushing aside Pánshin's arm, and left the room.

Liza ran after him. She overtook him on the steps.

"Christofór Feódoritch, listen,"— she said to him in German, as she accompanied him to the gate, across the close-cropped green grass of the yard:—"I am to blame toward you—forgive me."

Lemm made no reply.

"I showed your cantata to Vladímir Nikoláitch; I was convinced that he would appreciate it,—and it really did please him greatly."

Lemm halted.

"Zat is nozing,"—he said in Russian, and then added in his native tongue:—"but he cannot understand anything; how is it that you do not perceive that?—he is a dilettante—and that 's all there is to it!"

"You are unjust to him,"—returned Liza:—"he understands everything, and can do nearly everything himself."

"Yes, everything is second-class, light-weight, hasty work. That pleases, and he pleases, and he is content with that—well, and bravo! But I am not angry; that cantata and I—we are old fools; I am somewhat ashamed, but that does not matter."

"Forgive me, Christofór Feódoritch,"—said Liza again.

"It does not mattair, it does not mattair," he repeated again in Russian:—"you are a goot

girl . . . but see yonder, some vun is coming to your house. Good-bye. You are a fery goot girl."

And Lemm, with hasty strides, betook himself toward the gate, through which was entering a gentleman with whom he was not acquainted, clad in a grey coat and a broad-brimmed straw hat. Courteously saluting him (he bowed to all newcomers in the town of O * * * ; he turned away from his acquaintances on the street—that was the rule which he had laid down for himself), Lemm passed him, and disappeared behind the hedge. The stranger looked after him in amazement, and, exchanging a glance with Liza, advanced straight toward her.

VII

" You do not recognise me,"—he said, removing his hat,—" but I recognise you, although eight years have passed since I saw you last. You were a child then. I am Lavrétzky. Is your mother at home? Can I see her? "

" Mamma will be very glad,"—replied Liza:—" she has heard of your arrival."

" Your name is Elizavéta, I believe? "—said Lavrétzky, as he mounted the steps of the porch.

" Yes."

" I remember you well; you had a face, at that time, such as one does not forget; I used to bring you bonbons then."

Liza blushed and thought, " What a strange man he is! " Lavrétzky paused for a minute in the anteroom. Liza entered the drawing-room, where Pánshin's voice and laughter were resounding; he had imparted some gossip of the town to Márya Dmítrievna and Gedeónovsky, who had already returned from the garden, and was himself laughing loudly at what he had narrated. At the name of Lavrétzky, Márya Dmítrievna started in utter trepidation, turned pale, and advanced to meet him.

"How do you do, how do you do, my dear *cousin!*"—she exclaimed, in a drawling and almost tearful voice:—"how glad I am to see you!"

"How do you do, my kind cousin,"—returned Lavrétzky; and shook her proffered hand in a friendly way:—"how does the Lord show mercy on you?"

"Sit down, sit down, my dear Feódor Iványitch. Akh, how delighted I am! Permit me, in the first place, to present to you my daughter Liza. . ."

"I have already introduced myself to Lizavéta Mikhaílovna,"—Lavrétzky interrupted her.

"Monsieur Pánshin . . . . Sergyéi Petróvitch Gedeónovsky . . . . But pray sit down! I look at you, and I simply cannot believe my eyes. How is your health?"

"As you see, I am blooming. And you, cousin,—I don't want to cast the evil eye on you—you have not grown thin during these eight years."

"Just think, what a long time it is since we saw each other,"—remarked Márya Dmítrievna, dreamily.—"Whence come you now? Where have you left . . . . that is, I meant to say"—she hastily caught herself up—"I meant to say, are you to be with us long?"

"I have just come from Berlin,"—returned Lavrétzky,—"and to-morrow I set out for my estate—probably to remain there a long time."

"Of course, you will live at Lavríki?"

"No, not at Lavríki, but I have a tiny village about twenty-five versts from here; I am going there."

"The village which you inherited from Glafíra Petróvna?"

"The same."

"Good gracious, Feódor Iványitch! You have a splendid house at Lavríki!"

Lavrétzky scowled slightly.

"Yes . . . . but in that little estate there is a small wing; and, for the present, I need nothing more. That place is the most convenient for me just now."

Márya Dmítrievna again became so perturbed, that she even straightened herself up, and flung her hands apart. Pánshin came to her assistance, and entered into conversation with Lavrétzky. Márya Dmítrievna recovered her composure, leaned back in her chair, and only interjected a word from time to time; but, all the while, she gazed so compassionately at her visitor, she sighed so significantly, and shook her head so mournfully, that the latter, at last, could endure it no longer, and asked her, quite sharply: was she well?

"Thank God, yes,"—replied Márya Dmítrievna,—"why?"

"Because it seemed to me that you were not quite yourself."

Márya Dmítrievna assumed a dignified and

somewhat offended aspect.—"If that 's the way you take it,"—she said to herself,—"I don't care in the least; evidently, my good man, nothing affects thee any more than water does a goose; any one else would have pined away with grief, but it swells thee up more than ever." Márya Dmítrievna did not stand on ceremony with herself; she expressed herself more elegantly aloud.

As a matter of fact, Lavrétzky did not resemble a victim of fate. His rosy-cheeked, purely-Russian face, with its large, white brow, rather thick nose, and broad, regular lips, fairly overflowed with native health, with strong, durable force. He was magnificently built,—and his blond hair curled all over his head, like a young man's. Only in his eyes, which were blue and prominent and fixed, was there to be discerned something which was not revery, nor yet weariness, and his voice sounded rather too even.

In the meantime, Pánshin had continued to keep up the conversation. He turned it on the profits of sugar-refining, concerning which two French pamphlets had recently made their appearance, and with calm modesty undertook to set forth their contents, but without saying one word about them.

"Why, here 's Fédya!" suddenly rang out Márfa Timoféevna's voice in the adjoining room, behind the half-closed door:—"Actually, Fédya!" And the old woman briskly entered the

room. Before Lavrétzky could rise from his chair, she clasped him in her embrace.—" Come, show thyself, show thyself,"—she said, moving back from his face.—" Eh! What a splendid fellow thou art! Thou hast grown older, but hast not grown in the least less comely, really! But why art thou kissing my hands,—kiss me myself, if my wrinkled cheeks are not repulsive to thee. Can it be, that thou didst not ask after me: ' Well, tell me, is aunty alive? ' Why, thou wert born into my arms, thou rogue! Well, never mind that; why shouldst thou have remembered me? Only, thou art a sensible fellow, to have come. Well, my mother,"—she added, addressing Márya Dmítrievna,—" hast thou given him any refreshments? "

" I want nothing,"—said Lavrétzky, hastily.

" Come, drink some tea, at least, my dear little father. O Lord my God! He has come, no one knows whence, and they don't give him a cup of tea! Go, Liza, and see about it, as quickly as possible. I remember that, as a little fellow, he was a dreadful glutton, and he must be fond of eating even now."

" My respects, Márfa Timoféevna,"—said Pánshin, approaching the angry old woman from one side, and bowing low.

" Excuse me, sir,"—retorted Márfa Timoféevna,—" I did not notice you for joy.—Thou hast grown to resemble thy mother, the darling,"

—she went on, turning again to Lavrétzky:—"only, thy nose was and remains like thy father's. Well—and art thou to be long with us?"

"I am going away to-morrow, aunty."

"Whither?"

"Home, to Vasílievskoe."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Well, if it must be to-morrow, it must. God be with thee,—thou knowest best. Only, see here, thou must come to say farewell."—The old woman tapped him on the cheek.—"I did not think I should live to see thee; and that not because I was preparing to die; no—I am good for another ten years, probably: all we Péstoffs are tenacious of life; thy deceased grandfather used to call us double-lived; but the Lord only knew how much longer thou wouldst ramble about abroad. Well, but thou art a dashing fine fellow, a fine fellow; thou canst still lift ten puds in one hand as of yore, I suppose? Thy deceased father, excuse me, was cranky in some respects, but he did well when he hired a Swiss for thee; thou rememberest, how thou and he had fist-fights; that's called gymnastics, is n't it?—But why have I been cackling thus? I have only been keeping Mr. Panshín" (she never called him Pánshin, as she ought) "from arguing. But we had better drink tea; let us go and drink it on the terrace, my dear; our cream—is not like what you

get in your Londons and Parises. Let us go, let us go, and do thou, Fédiusha, give me thy arm. O! how thick it is! There 's no danger of falling with thee."

All rose and betook themselves to the terrace, with the exception of Gedeónovsky, who quietly departed. During the entire duration of Lavrétzky's conversation with the mistress of the house, Pánshin, and Márfa Timoféevna, he had sat in a corner, attentively blinking, and sticking out his lips, in childish curiosity: he now hastened to carry the news about the new visitor throughout the town.

On that same day, at eleven o'clock in the evening, this is what was going on at Mme. Kalítin's house. Down-stairs, on the threshold of the drawing-room, Vladímir Nikoláitch, having seized a favourable moment, was saying farewell to Liza, and telling her, as he held her hand: "You know who it is that attracts me hither; you know why I am incessantly coming to your house; what is the use of words, when everything is so plain?" Liza made him no reply, and without a smile, and with eyebrows slightly elevated, and blushing, she stared at the floor, but did not withdraw her hand; and up-stairs, in Márfa Timoféevna's chamber, by the light of the shrine-lamp, which hung in front of the dim, ancient holy pictures, Lavrétzky was sitting in an arm-chair, with his

elbows on his knees, and his face in his hands; the old woman, standing before him, was silently stroking his hair, from time to time. He spent more than an hour with her, after taking leave of the mistress of the house; he said almost nothing to his kind old friend, and she did not interrogate him. . . And what was the use of talking, what was there to interrogate him about? She understood everything as it was, and she sympathised with everything wherewith his heart was full to overflowing.

VIII

Feódor Iványovitch Lavrétzky (we must ask the reader's permission to break the thread of our narrative for a time) was descended from an ancient family of the nobility. The ancestral founder of the Lavrétzkys had come out of Prussia during the princely reign of Vasíly the Blind, and had been granted two hundred quarters[1] of land, on Byezhétsk Heights. Many of his descendants were members of various branches of the public service, and sat under princes and distinguished personages in distant governorships, but not one of them ever rose above the rank of table-decker at the Court of the Tzars, or acquired any considerable fortune. The most opulent and noteworthy of all the Lavrétzkys had been Feódor Iványitch's great-grandfather, Andréi, a harsh, insolent, clever, and crafty man. Down to the day of which we are speaking, the fame of his arbitrary violence, of his fiendish disposition, his mad lavishness, and unquenchable thirst had not died out. He had been very stout and lofty of stature, swarthy of visage, and

[1] An ancient land-measure, varying in different localities; the average "quarter" being about thirty by forty fathoms.—Translator.

beardless; he lisped, and appeared to be sleepy; but the more softly he spoke, the more did every one around him tremble. He obtained for himself a wife to match. Goggle-eyed, with hawk-like nose, with a round, sallow face, a gipsy by birth, quick-tempered and revengeful, she was not a whit behind her husband, who almost starved her to death, and whom she did not survive, although she was eternally snarling at him.

Andréi's son, Piótr, Feódor's grandfather, did not resemble his father: he was a simple squire of the steppes, decidedly hare-brained, a swashbuckler and dawdler, rough but not malicious, hospitable, and fond of dogs. He was more than thirty years old when he inherited from his father two thousand souls in capital order; but he speedily dispersed them, sold a part of his estate, and spoiled his house-servants. Petty little people, acquaintances and non-acquaintances, crawled from all sides, like black-beetles, to his spacious, warm, and slovenly mansion; all these ate whatever came to hand, but ate their fill, drank themselves drunk, and carried off what they could, lauding and magnifying the amiable host; and the host, when he was not in a good humour, also magnified his guests—as drones and blackguards—but he was bored without them. Piótr Andréitch's wife was a meek person: he took her from a neighbouring family, at his father's choice and command; her name was Anna

Pávlovna. She never interfered with anything, received visitors cordially, and was fond of going out herself, although powdering her hair, according to her own words, was death to her. They put a felt hood on your head, she was wont to narrate in her old age, combed your hair all up on top, smeared it with tallow, sprinkled on flour, stuck in iron pins,—and you could not wash yourself afterward; but to go visiting without powder was impossible—people would take offence;—torture!—She was fond of driving after trotters, was ready to play cards from morning until night, and always covered up with her hand the few farthings of winnings set down to her when her husband approached the card-table; but she gave her dowry and all her money to him, and required no accounting for its use. She bore him two children: a son, Iván, Feódor's father, and a daughter, Glafíra.

Iván was not brought up at home, but at the house of a wealthy old aunt, Princess Kubenskóy; she had designated him as her heir (had it not been for that, his father would not have let him go); she dressed him like a doll, hired every sort of teacher for him, provided him with a governor, a Frenchman, a former abbé, a disciple of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a certain M. Courtin de Vaucelles, an adroit and subtle intriguer,—the most *fine fleur* of the emigration, as she expressed it,—and ended by marrying this

" fine-fleur " when she was almost seventy years of age; she transferred to his name her entire fortune, and soon afterward, rouged, scented with amber, *à la Richelieu,* surrounded by small negroes, slender-legged dogs, and screeching parrots, she died on a crooked little couch of the time of Louis XV, with an enamelled snuff-box, the work of Petitot, in her hands,—and died, deserted by her husband: the sneaking M. Courtin had preferred to retire to Paris with her money.

Iván was only in his twentieth year when this blow (we are speaking of the Princess's marriage, not of her death) descended upon him; he did not wish to remain in his aunt's house, where from a wealthy heir he had suddenly been converted into a parasite; in Petersburg, the society in which he had been reared, was closed to him; to service, beginning with the lowest ranks, difficult and dark, he felt repugnance (all this took place at the very beginning of the reign of the Emperor Alexander). He was compelled, perforce, to return to the country, to his father. Dirty, poor, tattered did his native nest appear to him: the dulness and soot of existence on the steppes offended him at every step; he was tormented with boredom; on the other hand, every one in the house, with the exception of his mother, looked upon him with unfriendly eyes. His father did not like his habits of the capital; his dress-suits, frilled shirts, books, his flute, his cleanliness, in which,

not without reason, they scented his fastidiousness; he was constantly complaining and grumbling at his son.—" Nothing here suits him," he was wont to say: " at table he is dainty, he does not eat, he cannot endure the odour of the servants, the stifling atmosphere; the sight of drunken men disturbs him, and you must n't dare to fight in his presence, either; he will not enter government service: he 's frail in health, forsooth; phew, what an effeminate creature! And all because Voltaire sticks in his head!"

The old man cherished a particular dislike for Voltaire, and for the " fanatic " Diderot, although he had never read a single line of their writings: reading was not in his line. Piótr Andréitch was not mistaken: Diderot and Voltaire really were sticking in his son's head, and not they only,—but Rousseau and Raynal and Helvetius, and many other writers of the same sort, were sticking in his head,—but only in his head. Iván Petróvitch's former tutor, the retired abbé and encyclopedist, had contented himself with pouring the whole philosophy of the XVIII century into his pupil in a mass, and the latter went about brimful of it; it gained lodgment within him, without mingling with his blood, without penetrating into his soul, without making itself felt as a firm conviction. . . And could convictions be demanded of a young fellow of fifty years ago, when we have not even yet grown up to them?

He also embarrassed the visitors to his father's house: he loathed them, and they feared him; and with his sister, Glafíra, who was twelve years older than he, he did not get on at all.

This Glafíra was a strange being; homely, hunchbacked, gaunt, with stern, staring eyes and thin, tightly compressed lips; in face, voice, and quick, angular movements, she recalled her grandmother, the gipsy, the wife of Andréi. Persistent, fond of power, she would not even hear of marriage. The return of Iván Petróvitch did not please her; so long as the Princess Kubenskóy had kept him with her, she had cherished the hope of receiving at least half of the parental estate: she resembled her grandmother in her avarice. Moreover, Glafíra was envious of her brother: he was so cultivated, he spoke French so well, with a Parisian accent, while she was scarcely able to say: *"bon jour,"* and *"comment vous portez vous?"* To tell the truth, her parents did not understand any French at all,—but that did not render it any the more pleasant for her.

Iván Petróvitch did not know what to do with himself for tedium and melancholy; he spent nearly a year in the country, and it seemed to him like ten years.—Only with his mother did he relieve his heart, and he was wont to sit, by the hour, in her low-ceiled rooms, listening to the simple prattle of the good woman, and gorging himself with preserves. It so happened, that among

Anna Pávlovna's maids there was one very pretty girl, with clear, gentle eyes and delicate features, named Malánya, both clever and modest. She pleased Iván Petróvitch at first sight, and he fell in love with her: he fell in love with her timid walk, her shy answers, her soft voice, her gentle smile; with every passing day she seemed to him more charming. And she became attached to Iván Petróvitch with her whole soul, as only Russian girls can become attached—and gave herself to him.

In the country manor-house of a landed proprietor, no secret can be kept long: every one soon knew of the bond between the young master and Malánya; the tidings of this connection at last reached Piótr Andréitch himself. At any other time, he would, in all probability, have paid no heed to such an insignificant matter; but he had long been in a rage with his son, and rejoiced at the opportunity to put to shame the Petersburg philosopher and dandy. Tumult, shrieks, and uproar arose: Malánya was locked up in the lumber-room; Iván Petróvitch was summoned to his parent. Anna Pávlovna also hastened up at the outcry. She made an effort to pacify her husband, but Piótr Andréitch no longer listened to anything. Like a vulture he pounced upon his son, upbraided him with immorality, with impiety, with hypocrisy; incidentally, he vented on him all his accumulated wrath against the

Princess Kubenskóy, and overwhelmed him with insulting epithets. At first, Iván Petróvitch held his peace, and stood firm, but when his father took it into his head to threaten him with a disgraceful chastisement, he lost patience. "The fanatic Diderot has come on the stage again," he thought,—"so just wait, I'll put him in action; I 'll astonish you all."

Thereupon, in a quiet voice, although trembling in every limb, Iván Petróvitch announced to his father, that there was no necessity for upbraiding him with immorality, that, although he did not intend to justify his fault, yet he was ready to rectify it, and that the more willingly because he felt himself superior to all prejudices —in short, he was ready to marry Malánya. By uttering these words, Iván Petróvitch did, undoubtedly, attain his object: he astounded Piótr Andréitch to such a degree, that the latter stared with all his eyes, and was rendered dumb for a moment; but he immediately recovered himself, and just as he was, clad in a short coat lined with squirrel-skin, and with slippers on his bare feet, he flung himself with clenched fists upon Iván Petróvitch, who that day, as though expressly, had his hair dressed *à la Titus,* and had donned a new blue English dress-coat, boots with tassels, and dandified chamois trousers, skin-tight. Anna Pávlovna shrieked at the top of her voice, and covered her face with her hands, but her son ran

through the whole house, sprang out into the yard, rushed into the vegetable garden, across the garden, flew out upon the highway, and kept running, without looking behind him, until, at last, he ceased to hear behind him the heavy tramp of his father's footsteps, and his violent, broken shouts. . . . " Stop, rascal! " he roared,—" stop! I 'll curse thee! "

Iván Petróvitch hid himself in the house of a neighbouring peasant proprietor, while Piótr Andréitch returned home utterly exhausted and perspiring, and announcing almost before he had recovered his breath, that he would deprive his son of his blessing and his heritage, ordered all his idiotic books to be burned, and the maid Malánya to be sent forthwith to a distant village. Kind people turned up, who sought out Iván Petróvitch and informed him of all. Mortified, enraged, he vowed that he would take revenge on his father; and that very night, lying in wait for the peasant cart in which Malánya was being carried off, he rescued her by force, galloped off with her to the nearest town, and married her. He was supplied with money by a neighbour, an eternally intoxicated and extremely good-natured retired naval officer, a passionate lover of every sort of noble adventure, as he expressed it. On the following day, Iván Petróvitch wrote a caustically-cold and courteous letter to Piótr Andréitch, and betook himself to an estate where dwelt his sec-

ond cousin, Dmítry Péstoff, and his sister, Márfa Timoféevna, already known to the reader. He told them everything, announced that he intended to go to Petersburg to seek a place, and requested them to give shelter to his wife, for a time at least. At the word "wife" he fell to weeping bitterly, and, despite his city breeding and his philosophy, he prostrated himself humbly, after the fashion of a Russian beggar, before the feet of his relatives, and even beat his brow against the floor. The Péstoffs, kind and compassionate people, gladly acceded to his request; he spent three weeks with them, in secret expectation of a reply from his father; but no reply came,—and none could come. Piótr Andréitch, on learning of his son's marriage, had taken to his bed, and had forbidden the name of Iván Petróvitch to be mentioned in his presence; but his mother, without the knowledge of her husband, borrowed five hundred rubles from the ecclesiastical supervisor of the diocese, and sent them to him, together with a small holy picture for his wife;[1] she was afraid to write, but she gave orders that Iván Petróvitch was to be told, by the lean peasant her envoy, who managed to walk sixty versts in the course of twenty-four hours, that he must not grieve too much, that, God willing, everything would come right, and his father would convert wrath into mercy; that she, also, would have pre-

[1] That is to say, she sent her maternal blessing.—TRANSLATOR.

ferred a different daughter-in-law, but that, evidently, God had so willed it, and she sent her maternal blessing to Malánya Sergyéevna. The lean little peasant received a ruble, requested permission to see his new mistress, to whom he was related as co-sponsor at a baptism, kissed her hand, and hastened off homeward.

And Iván Petróvitch set off for Petersburg with a light heart. The unknown future awaited him; poverty, perhaps, menaced him, but he had bidden farewell to the life in the country which he detested, and, most important of all, he had not betrayed his teachers, he really had "put in action" and justified in fact Rousseau, Diderot, and *la déclaration des droits de l'homme*. . A sense of duty accomplished, of triumph, of pride, filled his soul; and his separation from his wife did not greatly alarm him; the necessity of living uninterruptedly with his wife would have perturbed him more. That affair was ended; he must take up other affairs. In Petersburg, contrary to his own expectation, fortune smiled on him: Princess Kubenskóy—whom Monsieur Courtin had already succeeded in abandoning, but who had not yet succeeded in dying,—by way, in some measure, of repairing the injury which she had done to her nephew, recommended him to the good graces of all her friends, and gave him five thousand rubles,—almost her last farthing,—and a Lepíkovsky watch with his coat of arms

in a garland of cupids. Three months had not elapsed, when he had already obtained a place in the Russian mission to London, and he went to sea on the first English ship which sailed (there was no thought of steamers in those days). A few months later, he received a letter from Pés-toff. The kind-hearted squire congratulated Iván Petróvitch on the birth of a son, who had made his appearance in the world, in the village of Pokróvskoe, on August 20, 1807, and was named Feódor, in honour of the holy martyr, Feódor the Strategist. Owing to her extreme weakness, Malánya Sergyéevna added only a few lines; but those few lines astonished Iván Petró-vitch: he was not aware that Márfa Timoféevna had taught his wife to read and write. However, Iván Petróvitch did not give himself up for long to the sweet agitation of paternal emotions: he was paying court to one of the most famous Phrynes or Laïses of the period (classical appel-lations were still flourishing at that epoch); the peace of Tilsit had just been concluded, and everybody was making haste to enjoyment, every-thing was whirling round in a sort of mad whirl-wind. He had very little money; but he played luckily at cards, he picked up acquaintances, he took part in all the merrymakings,—in a word, he was dashing along under full sail.

IX

It was long before old Lavrétzky could forgive his son for his marriage; if, after the lapse of half a year, Iván Petróvitch had presented himself in contrition, and had flung himself at his feet, he would, probably, have pardoned him, after first scolding him roundly, and administering a few taps with his crutch, by way of inspiring awe; but Iván Petróvitch was living abroad, and, evidently, cared not a rap.—"Hold your tongue! Don't dare!" Piótr Andréitch kept repeating to his wife, as soon as she tried to incline him to mercy: "He ought to pray to God for me forever, the pup, for not having laid my curse upon him; my late father would have slain him with his own hands, the good-for-nothing, and he would have done right." At such terrible speeches, Anna Pávlovna merely crossed herself furtively. As for Iván Petróvitch's wife, Piótr Andréitch, at first, would not allow her to be mentioned, and even in reply to a letter of Péstoff, wherein the latter alluded to his daughter-in-law, he gave orders to say to him, that he knew nothing whatever about any daughter-in-law of his, and that it was prohibited by the laws to harbour runaway maids,

on which point he regarded it as his duty to warn him; but later on, when he learned of the birth of a grandson, he softened, gave orders that inquiries should be made on the sly concerning the health of the young mother, and sent her, also as though it did not come from him, a little money. Fédya had not reached his first birthday, when Anna Pávlovna was seized with a fatal illness. A few days before her end, when she could no longer leave her bed, she declared to her husband, in the presence of the priest, that she wished to see and bid farewell to her daughter-in-law, and to bestow her blessing on her grandchild. The afflicted old man soothed her, and immediately sent his own equipage for his daughter-in-law, for the first time calling her Malánya Sergyéevna.[1] She came with her son and with Márfa Timoféevna, who would not let her go alone on any terms, and would not have allowed her to be affronted. Half dead with terror, Malánya entered Piótr Andréitch's study. The nurse carried Fédya after her. Piótr Andréitch gazed at her in silence; she approached to kiss his hand; her quivering lips hardly met in a noiseless kiss.

"Well, new-ground, undried noblewoman,"—he said at last:—"how do you do; let us go to the mistress."

He rose and bent over Fédya; the baby smiled,

[1] Serfs were not addressed with their patronymic by their superiors.—TRANSLATOR.

and stretched out his little, white arms. The old man was completely upset.

"Okh," he said,—"thou orphan! Thou hast plead thy father's cause with me; I will not abandon thee, my birdling!"

As soon as Malánya Sergyéevna entered the bedchamber of Anna Pávlovna, she knelt down near the door. Anna Pávlovna beckoned her to the bed, embraced her, blessed her son; then, turning her countenance, ravaged by disease, to her husband, she tried to speak. . .

"I know, I know what entreaty thou desirest to make,"—said Piótr Andréitch:—"do not worry: she shall stay with us, and I will pardon Vánka for her sake."

Anna Pávlovna, with an effort, grasped her husband's hand, and pressed it to her lips. On that same evening she died.

Piótr Andréitch kept his word. He informed his son, that, for the sake of his mother's dying hour, for the sake of baby Feódor, he restored to him his blessing, and would keep Malánya Sergyéevna in his own house. Two rooms were set apart for her use in the entresol, he introduced her to his most respected visitor, one-eyed Brigadier Skuryókhin, and to his wife; he presented her with two maids and a page-boy for errands. Márfa Timoféevna bade her farewell; she detested Glafíra, and quarrelled with her thrice in the course of one day.

At first the poor woman found her situation painful and awkward; but afterward, she learned to bear things patiently, and became accustomed to her father-in-law. He, also, became accustomed to her, he even grew to love her, although he almost never spoke to her, although in his caresses a certain involuntary disdain toward her was perceptible. Malánya Sergyéevna had most of all to endure from her sister-in-law. Glafíra, already during her mother's lifetime, had succeeded in getting gradually the entire house into her hands: every one, beginning with her father, was subject to her; not a lump of sugar was given out without her permission; she would have consented to die, rather than to share the power with any other mistress of the house! Her brother's marriage had angered her even more than it had Piótr Andréitch: she took it upon herself to teach the upstart a lesson, and from the very first hour Malánya Sergyéevna became her slave.

And how could she contend with the self-willed, arrogant Glafíra, she who was mild, constantly agitated, and terrified, and also weak in health? Not a day passed, that Glafíra did not remind her of her former position, did not praise her for not forgetting her place. Malánya Sergyéevna would gladly have reconciled herself to these reminders and praises, however bitter they might be . . . . but they took Fédya away from her: that was what broke her heart. Under the

pretext that she was not competent to take charge of his education, she was hardly permitted to see him; Glafíra took this matter upon herself; the child passed under her full control. Malánya Sergyéevna began, out of grief, to entreat Iván Petróvitch, in her letters, to come home as speedily as possible; Piótr Andréitch himself wished to see his son; but he merely wrote in reply, thanking his father about his wife, and for the money sent, and promising to come soon,—and did not come. The year '12 recalled him, at last, to his fatherland from abroad.

On meeting again, for the first time, after their six years' separation, the father and son exchanged embraces, and did not allude, by so much as a word, to their former dissensions; they were not in the mood for it then: all Russia had risen against the enemy, and both of them felt that Russian blood was flowing in their veins. Piótr Andréitch, at his own expense, clothed an entire regiment of soldiers. But the war came to an end, the danger passed; again Iván Petróvitch began to feel bored, again he longed for far-away places, for the world to which he had grown fast, and where he felt himself at home. Malánya Sergyéevna could not hold him back; she counted for too little with him. Even her hopes had not been realised: her husband, also, deemed it much more fitting that Fédya's education should be entrusted to Glafíra. Iván Petróvitch's poor wife could

not withstand this blow, could not endure this second parting: without a murmur, in a few days she expired. During the whole course of her life, she had never been able to offer resistance, and she did not combat her malady. She could no longer speak, the shadows of the tomb had already descended upon her face, but her features, as of old, expressed patient perplexity, and the steadfast gentleness of submission; with the same dumb humility she gazed at Glafíra, and, like Anna Pávlovna on her deathbed, she kissed the hand of Piótr Andréitch, and pressed her lips to Glafíra's hand also, entrusting to her, Glafíra, her only son. Thus ended its earthly career a kind and gentle being, torn, God alone knows why, from its native soil and immediately flung aside, like an uprooted sapling, with its roots to the sun; it faded away, it vanished, without a trace, that being, and no one mentioned it. Those who grieved for Malánya Sergyéevna were her maid and Piótr Andréitch. The old man missed her silent presence. "Forgive—farewell, my patient one!" he whispered, as he made her the parting reverence in church. He wept as he threw a handful of earth into the grave.

He did not long survive her—not more than five years. In the winter of 1819, he died peacefully in Moscow, whither he had removed with Glafíra and his grandson, and left orders in his will, that he should be buried by the side of Anna

Pávlovna and "Malásha." Iván Petróvitch was in Paris at the time, for his pleasure; he had resigned from the service soon after 1815. On hearing of his father's death, he decided to return to Russia. It was necessary to consider the organisation of the estate . . . and Fédya, according to Glafíra's letter, had reached the age of twelve years, and the time had arrived for occupying himself seriously with the boy's education.

X

Ivan Petróvitch returned to Russia an Anglomaniac. His closely-clipped hair, starched neckcloth, long-skirted, yellowish-gray overcoat with a multitude of capes, his sour expression of visage, a certain harshness and also indifference of demeanour, his manner of talking through his teeth, a wooden, abrupt laugh, the absence of smiles, a conversation exclusively political and politico-economical, a passion for bloody roast beef and port wine,—everything about him fairly reeked of Great Britain; he seemed thoroughly imbued with her spirit. But—strange to say! while he had turned into an Anglomaniac, Iván Petróvitch had simultaneously become a patriot; at all events, he called himself a patriot, although he was but badly acquainted with Russia, was not wedded to a single Russian habit, and expressed himself queerly in Russian: in ordinary conversation, his speech was clumsy and pithless, studded all over with Gallicisms; but no sooner did the discussion touch upon important topics, than Iván Petróvitch instantly brought out such expressions as: " to show new proofs of self-zeal,"[1] " that doth

[1] That is to say, he used such fundamentally national words as occur only in the Old Church Slavonic, well-nigh untranslatable here, also employed upon occasions of ceremony. — Translator.

not agree with the nature of the circumstances," and so forth. Iván Petróvitch brought with him several manuscript plans touching the organisation and amelioration of the empire; he was extremely dissatisfied with everything he saw,—the absence of system, in particular, stirred up his bile. On meeting his sister, he announced to her, with his very first words, that he intended to introduce radical reforms, that henceforth everything on his estate should proceed upon a new system. Glafíra Petróvna made no reply to Iván Petróvitch, but merely set her teeth, and said to herself: "And what is to become of me?"—But when she reached the country estate, in company with her brother and her nephew, she speedily regained her composure. In the house, several changes actually took place: the female hangers-on and drones were subjected to instant expulsion; among their number two old women suffered, one who was blind and the other crippled with paralysis, also a decrepit Major of the Otchakóff period, who, on account of his truly astonishing voracity, was fed on nothing but black bread and lentils. A decree was also issued, that the former guests were not to be received: they were superseded by a distant neighbour, a fair-haired, scrofulous baron, a very well educated and very stupid man. New furniture from Moscow made its appearance; cuspidors, and bells, and wash-stands were introduced and they began

to serve the noon breakfast differently; foreign wines took the place of vódka and home-made liqueurs; new liveries were made for the servants; the motto, "in recto virtus," was added to the family coat of arms. . . . But, in reality, Glafíra's power was not diminished: all the disbursements and purchases depended on her, as before; the imported Alsatian valet made an attempt to vie with her—and lost his place, in spite of the fact that his master took his side. So far as the management, the administration, of the estates was concerned (Glafíra Petróvna entered into all these matters), despite Iván Petróvitch's frequently expressed intention "to infuse new life into this chaos," everything remained as of yore, except that, here and there, the quit-rents were augmented, and the husbandry-service became more oppressive, and the peasants were forbidden to apply directly to Iván Petróvitch. The patriot heartily despised his fellow-citizens. Iván Petróvitch's system was applied, in its full force, to Fédya only: his education actually was subjected to "radical reform"; his father had exclusive charge of it.

XI

Up to the time of Iván Petróvitch's return from abroad, Fédya had been, as we have already said, in the hands of Glafíra Petróvna. He was less than eight years of age when his mother died, he had not seen her every day, and he had loved her passionately: the memory of her, of her pale and gentle face, her melancholy glances and timid caresses, had forever imprinted itself upon his heart; but he dimly comprehended her position in the house; he was conscious that between him and her there existed a barrier which she dared not and could not overthrow. He shunned his father, and Iván Petróvitch never petted him; his grandfather occasionally stroked his head, and permitted him to kiss his hand, but he called him and considered him a little fool. After the death of Malánya Sergyéevna, his aunt took him in hand definitively. Fédya feared her,—feared her bright, keen eyes, her sharp voice; he dared not utter a sound in her presence; it sometimes happened that when he had merely fidgeted on his chair, she would scream out: "Where art thou going? sit still!" On Sundays, after the Liturgy, he was permitted to play,—that is to say, he was

given a thick book, a mysterious book, the work of a certain Maxímovitch-Ambódik, entitled: "Symbols and Emblems." This book contained about a thousand in part very puzzling pictures, with equally puzzling explanations in five languages. Cupid, with a plump, naked body, played a great part in these pictures. To one of them, labelled "Saffron and Rainbow," was appended the explanation: "The action of this is great . . . "; opposite another, which represented "A Heron flying with a violet blossom in his mouth," stood the inscription: "All of them are known unto thee." Cupid and a bear licking its cub was designated as: "Little by little." Fédya contemplated these pictures; he was familiar with the most minute details of them all; some of them —always the same ones—set him to thinking and excited his imagination; he knew no other diversions. When the time came to teach him languages and music, Glafíra Petróvna hired, for a paltry sum, an elderly spinster, a Swede, with frightened, hare-like eyes, who spoke French and German indifferently, played the piano after a fashion, and, in addition, knew how to salt cucumbers in first-class style. In the society of this instructress, of his aunt, and of an old chambermaid, Vasílievna, Fédya passed four whole years. He used to sit in the corner with his "Emblems" —and sit . . . and sit . . . while the low-ceiled room smelled of geraniums, a solitary tallow

candle burned dimly, a cricket chirped monotonously, as though it were bored, the little clock ticked hastily on the wall, a mouse stealthily scratched and gnawed behind the wall-hangings, and the three old maids, like the Parcæ, moved their knitting-needles silently and swiftly to and fro, the shadows cast by their hands now flitted, again quivered strangely in the semi-darkness, and strange thoughts, also half-dark, swarmed in the child's head. No one would have called Fédya an interesting child: he was quite pallid, but fat, awkwardly built, and clumsy,—" a regular peasant," according to Glafíra Petróvna's expression; the pallor would speedily have disappeared from his face if he had been permitted to go out of doors more frequently. He studied tolerably well, although he frequently idled; he never wept; on the other hand, at times a fierce obstinacy came over him; then no one could do anything with him. Fédya loved none of the persons around him. . . . . Woe to the heart which loves not in its youth!

Thus did Iván Petróvitch find him, and without loss of time he set to work to apply his system to him.—" I want to make a man of him first of all, *un homme,*"—he said to Glafíra Petróvna: —" and not only a man, but a Spartan." Iván Petróvitch began the execution of his intention by dressing his son in Highland garb: the lad of twelve began to go about with bare knees,

and with a cock's feather in his crush-cap; the Swede was superseded by a young Swiss man, who had learned gymnastics to perfection; music, as an occupation unworthy of a man, was banished forever; the natural sciences, international law, mathematics, the carpenter's trade after the advice of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and heraldry, for the maintenance of knightly sentiments—these were the things wherewith the future "man" was to occupy himself; he was waked at four o'clock in the morning, was immediately drenched with cold water, and made to run around a tall pillar, at the end of a rope; he ate once a day, one dish, rode on horseback, practised firing a cross-bow; on every convenient opportunity he exercised his strength of will, after the model of his parent, and every evening he noted down in a special book an account of the past day and his impressions; and Iván Petróvitch, on his side, wrote him precepts in French, in which he called him *mon fils,* and addressed him as *vous.* In Russian Fédya called his father "thou," but he dared not sit down in his presence. The "system" bewildered the boy, introduced confusion into his head, squeezed it; but, on the other hand, the new mode of life acted beneficially on his health: at first he caught a fever, but soon recovered, and became a fine, dashing fellow. His father was proud of him, and called him, in his strange jargon: "A son of nature, my product." When

Fédya reached the age of sixteen, Iván Petróvitch regarded it as his duty to instil into him betimes scorn for the fair sex,—and the youthful Spartan, with timidity in his soul, with the first down upon his lips, full of vigour, strength, and blood, attempted to appear indifferent, cold, and harsh.

Meanwhile, time passed and passed. Iván Petróvitch spent the greater part of the year at Lavríki (that was the name of his paternal estate), and in the winters he went alone to Moscow, stopped at an inn, diligently frequented the club, orated and set forth his plans in drawing-rooms, and conducted himself more like an Anglomaniac, a grumbler, and a statesman than ever. But the year 1825 arrived, and brought with it much woe.[1] Iván Petróvitch's intimate friends and acquaintances were subjected to severe trials. Iván Petróvitch made haste to retreat to his country estate, and locked himself up in his house. Another year elapsed, and Iván Petróvitch suddenly grew feeble, weakened, declined, his health deserted him. A free-thinker —he took to going to church, and to ordering services of prayer; a European—he began to steam himself at the bath, to dine at two o'clock, to go to bed at nine, to fall asleep to the chatter of the aged butler; a statesman—he burned all his plans, all his correspondence, trembled before the gov-

[1] At the accession to the throne of Nicholas I.—Translator.

ernor, and fidgeted in the presence of the rural chief of police; a man with a will of iron—he whimpered and complained when an abscess broke out on him, when he was served with a plate of cold soup. Glafíra Petróvna again reigned over everything in the house; again clerks, village bailiffs, common peasants, began to creep through the back entrance to the " ill-tempered old hag," —that was what the house-servants called her. The change in Iván Petróvitch gave his son a great shock; he was already in his nineteenth year, and had begun to reason and to free himself from the weight of the hand which oppressed him. He had noticed, even before this, a discrepancy between his father's words and deeds, between his broad and liberal theories and his harsh, petty despotism; but he had not anticipated such a sudden break. The inveterate egoist suddenly revealed himself at full length. Young Lavrétzky was getting ready to go to Moscow, to prepare himself for the university,—when an unforeseen, fresh calamity descended upon the head of Iván Petróvitch: he became blind, and that hopelessly, in one day.

Not trusting in the skill of Russian physicians, he began to take measures to obtain permission to go abroad. It was refused. Then he took his son with him, and for three whole years he roamed over Russia, from one doctor to another, incessantly journeying from town to town and

driving the physicians, his son, his servants, to despair by his pusillanimity and impatience. He returned to Lavríki a perfect rag, a tearful and capricious child. Bitter days ensued, every one endured much at his hands. Iván Petróvitch calmed down only while he was eating his dinner; he had never eaten so greedily, nor so much; all the rest of the time he never gave himself or others any peace. He prayed, grumbled at fate, railed at himself, reviled politics, his system,—reviled everything which he had made his boast and upon which he had prided himself, everything which he had held up as an example for his son; he insisted that he believed in nothing, and then prayed again; he could not bear to be left alone for a single moment, and demanded from the members of his household, that they should sit uninterruptedly, day and night, beside his arm-chair, and amuse him with stories, which he incessantly interrupted with the exclamation: "You are inventing the whole of it—what trash!"

Glafíra Petróvna had a particularly hard time; he positively could not get along without her—and to the end she complied with all the invalid's whims, although sometimes she could not make up her mind on the instant to answer him, lest the sound of her voice should betray her inward wrath. In this manner he lingered on two years, and died in the beginning of May, when he had been carried out upon the balcony, in the sunshine.

"Gláshka, Gláshka! the bouillon, the bouillon, you old foo . . . . ." lisped his stiffening tongue, and without finishing the last word, it became silent forever. Glafíra Petróvna, who had just snatched the cup of bouillon from the hands of the butler, stopped short, stared her brother in the face, crossed herself slowly and broadly, and withdrew in silence; and his son, who was present, said nothing, either, but leaned against the railing of the balcony, and gazed for a long time into the garden, all fragrant and verdant, all glittering in the rays of the golden sun of spring. He was twenty-three years old; how terribly, how imperceptibly fast those three and twenty years had sped past! . . . . . Life was opening before him.

XII

After having buried his father, and entrusted to the immutable Glafíra Petróvna the management of the farming and the oversight over the clerks, young Lavrétzky betook himself to Moscow, whither he was drawn by an obscure but powerful sentiment. He recognised the defects of his education, and intended to repair omissions, so far as possible. During the last five years, he had read a great deal, and had seen some things; many thoughts had been seething in his brain; any professor might have envied him some of his knowledge, but, at the same time, he did not know much with which every gymnasium lad has long been familiar. The Anglomaniac had played his son an evil trick; his whimsical education had borne its fruits. For long years, he had abased himself before his father without a question; but when, at last, he had divined him, the deed was done, the habits had become rooted. He did not know how to make acquaintance with people: at twenty-three years of age, with an indomitable thirst for love in his shame-stricken heart, he did not dare to look a single woman in the eye. With his clear, solid but somewhat heavy sense, with

his inclination to stubbornness, contemplation, and indolence, he ought, from his earliest years, to have been cast into the whirlpool of life, but he had been kept in an artificial isolation. . . . And now the charmed circle was broken, yet he continued to stand in one spot, locked up, tightly compressed in himself. It was ridiculous, at his age, to don a student's uniform; but he was not afraid of ridicule: his Spartan training had served its turn to this extent at least, that it had developed in him scorn for other people's remarks,—and so, unabashed, he donned the uniform of a student. He entered the physico-mathematical department. Healthy, rosy-cheeked, with a well-grown beard, taciturn, he produced a strange impression upon his comrades; they did not suspect that in this surly man, who punctually drove to the lectures in a roomy country sledge and pair, there was concealed almost a child. He seemed to them some sort of wise pedant; they did not need him and did not seek his society, he avoided them. In the course of the first two years which he spent at the university, he came into close contact with only one student, from whom he took lessons in Latin. This student, Mikhalévitch by name, an enthusiast and a poet, sincerely loved Lavrétzky, and quite innocently became the cause of an important change in his fate.

One day, at the theatre (Motcháloff was then at the height of his fame, and Lavrétzky never

missed a performance), he saw a young girl in a box of the *bel-étage,*—and, although no woman ever passed his surly figure without causing his heart to quiver, it never yet had beaten so violently. With her elbows resting on the velvet of the box, the young girl sat motionless; alert, young life sparkled in every feature of her pretty, round, dark-skinned face; an elegant mind was expressed in the beautiful eyes which gazed attentively and softly from beneath slender brows, in the swift smile of her expressive lips, in the very attitude of her head, her arms, her neck; she was charmingly dressed. Beside her sat a wrinkled, sallow woman, forty-five years of age, with a toothless smile on her constrainedly-anxious and empty countenance, and in the depths of the box an elderly man was visible, wearing an ample coat and a tall neckcloth, with an expression of feeble stateliness and a certain obsequious suspicion in his little eyes, with dyed moustache and side-whiskers, an insignificant, huge forehead, and furrowed cheeks,—a retired General, by all the signs. Lavrétzky could not take his eyes from the young girl who had startled him; all at once, the door of the box opened, and Mikhalévitch entered. The appearance of that man, almost his sole acquaintance in all Moscow,—his appearance in the company of the only young girl who had engrossed his whole attention, seemed to Lavrétzky strange and significant. As he continued

to gaze at the box, he noticed that all the persons in it treated Mikhalévitch like an old friend. The performance on the stage ceased to interest Lavrétzky; Motcháloff himself, although that evening he was "in high feather," did not produce upon him the customary impression. In one very pathetic passage, Lavrétzky involuntarily glanced at his beauty: she was bending her whole body forward, her cheeks were aflame; under the influence of his persistent gaze, her eyes, which were riveted on the stage, turned slowly, and rested upon him. . . . All night long, those eyes flitted before his vision. At last, the artificially erected dam had given way: he trembled and burned, and on the following day he betook himself to Mikhalévitch. From him he learned, that the beauty's name was Varvára Pávlovna Koróbyn; that the old man and woman who had sat with her in the box were her father and mother, and that he himself, Mikhalévitch, had made their acquaintance a year previously, during his stay in the suburbs of Moscow, "on contract service" (as tutor) with Count N. The enthusiast expressed himself in the most laudatory manner concerning Varvára Pávlovna—"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, with the impetuous harmony in his voice which was peculiar to him,—"that young girl is an amazing, a talented being, an artist in the genuine sense of the word, and extremely amiable to boot."—Perceiving from La-

vrétzky's question what an impression Varvára Pávlovna had produced upon him, he himself proposed to introduce him to her, adding that he was quite at home in their house; that the General was not at all a proud man, and the mother was so stupid that she all but sucked a rag. Lavrétzky blushed, muttered something unintelligible, and fled. For five whole days he wrestled with his timidity; on the sixth day the young Spartan donned a new uniform, and placed himself at the disposition of Mikhalévitch, who being his own valet, confined himself to brushing his hair,— and the two set out for the Koróbyns'.

XIII

The father of Varvára Pávlovna, Pável Petróvitch Koróbyn, Major-General on the retired list, had spent his whole life in Petersburg, in the service; had borne the reputation, in his youth, of being an accomplished dancer and officer of the line; found himself, owing to poverty, the adjutant of two or three ill-favoured Generals; married the daughter of one of them, receiving twenty-five thousand rubles as her dowry; acquired, in its finest details, the love of drills and reviews; toiled, and toiled hard, for his livelihood, and at last, at the end of twenty years, attained to the rank of General, and received a regiment. It was time for him to rest, and without delay to establish his prosperity on a firm basis; this was what he calculated on doing, but he managed the matter somewhat incautiously: he hit upon a new method of putting the coin of the realm into circulation,—the method proved to be a capital one, but he did not get out in season: a complaint was made against him; a more than unpleasant, an ugly scandal ensued. The General managed to wriggle out of the scandal, after a fashion, but his career was ruined: he was

advised to resign. He hung about in Petersburg for a couple of years longer in the hope that some snug little place would get stranded on him: but the place did not strand on him, and his daughter came out of the government school, and his expenses increased every day. . . . Repressing his wrath, he decided to remove to Moscow for the sake of economy, hired a tiny, low-roofed house on Old Stable Street, with a coat of arms a fathom tall on the roof, and began to live the life of a Moscow General on the retired list, spending 2750 rubles a year. Moscow is a hospitable town, glad to welcome everybody who comes along, and more particularly, Generals; Pável Petróvitch's heavy figure, which yet was not lacking in military mien, speedily began to make its appearance in the best drawing-rooms of Moscow. His bald nape, with tufts of dyed hair, and the dirty ribbon of the order of St. Anna on a neckcloth the hue of the raven's wing, began to be well known to all the easily bored and pallid young men who morosely hovered around the gambling-tables while dancing was in progress. Pável Petróvitch understood how to place himself in society; he talked little, but, by force of old habit, through his nose,—of course, not with individuals belonging to the higher ranks; he played cards cautiously, at home he ate sparingly, but when visiting he ate for six. Concerning his wife, there is hardly anything to say: her name was

Kalliópe Kárlovna; a tear oozed from her left eye, by virtue of which Kalliópe Kárlovna (she was, moreover, of German extraction) regarded herself as a woman of sentiment; she lived in constant fear of something, never seemed to have had quite enough to eat, and wore tight velvet gowns, a turban, and dull bracelets of hollow metal. Varvára Pávlovna, the only daughter of Pável Petróvitch and Kalliópe Kárlovna, had just passed her seventeenth birthday when she came out of the * * * Institute, where she had been considered, if not the greatest beauty, certainly the cleverest girl and the best musician, and where she had received the *chiffre;*[1] she was not yet nineteen when Lavrétzky beheld her for the first time.

[1] In the Government Institutes for girls, the chief prize is the Empress's initial, in jewels.— TRANSLATOR.

XIV

The legs of the Spartan gave way beneath him when Mikhalévitch conducted him into the rather shabbily furnished drawing-room of the Koróbyns, and presented him to the master and mistress of the house. But the feeling of timidity which had taken possession of him promptly disappeared: in the General the kindliness of nature innate in all Russians was greatly increased by that special sort of courtesy which is peculiar to all besmirched people; the Generaless soon disappeared, somehow; as for Varvára Pávlovna, she was so calm and self-possessedly amiable, that any one would immediately have felt himself at home in her presence; moreover, from the whole of her enchanting person, from her smiling eyes, from her innocently-sloping shoulders and faintly-rosy hands, from her light and, at the same time, rather languid gait, from the very sound of her voice, which was low and sweet,—there breathed forth an insinuating charm, as intangible as a delicate perfume, a soft and as yet modest intoxication, something which it is difficult to express in words, but which touched and excited,—and, of course, excited something which was not timidity. Lavrétzky turned the

conversation on the theatre, on the performance of the preceding evening; she immediately began, herself, to speak of Motcháloff, and did not confine herself merely to exclamations and sighs, but uttered several just and femininely-penetrating remarks concerning his acting. Mikhalévitch alluded to music; without any affectation she seated herself at the piano, and played with precision several mazurkas by Chopin, which had only just come into fashion. The dinner-hour arrived; Lavrétzky made a motion to depart, but they kept him; at table, the General treated him to good claret, for which the General's lackey had galloped in a cab to Depré's. Late at night, Lavrétzky returned home, and sat for a long time, without undressing, his eyes covered with his hand, in dumb enchantment. It seemed to him, that only now had he come to understand why life was worth living; all his hypotheses, his intentions, all that nonsense and rubbish, vanished instantaneously; his whole soul was merged in one sentiment, in one desire, in the desire for happiness, possession, love, the sweet love of woman. From that day forth, he began to go often to the Koróbyns'. Six months later, he declared himself to Varvára Pávlovna, and offered her his hand. His proposal was accepted; the General had long since, almost on the eve of his first visit, inquired of Mikhalévitch how many serfs he, Lavrétzky, had; and Varvára Pávlovna

also, who, during the whole period of the young man's courtship and even at the moment of his declaration, had preserved her habitual tranquillity and clearness of soul,—Varvára Pávlovna also was well aware that her lover was rich; and Kalliópe Kárlovna said to herself: "Meine Tochter macht eine schöne Partie"—and bought herself a new turban.

XV

So his proposal was accepted, but on certain conditions. In the first place, Lavrétzky must immediately leave the university: who marries a student? and what a dreadful idea,—for a landed proprietor, rich, and twenty-six years old, to take lessons like a school-boy! In the second place, Varvára Pávlovna took upon herself the labour of ordering and purchasing the trousseau, even of choosing the bridegroom's gifts. She had a great deal of practical sense, much taste, much love for comfort, and a great knack for securing for herself that comfort. This knack particularly astonished Lavrétzky when, immediately after the wedding, he and his wife set out in a commodious carriage, which she had bought, for Lavríki. How everything which surrounded him had been planned, foreseen, provided for by Varvára Pávlovna! What charming travelling requisites, what fascinating toilet-boxes and coffee-pots, made their appearance in divers snug nooks, and how prettily Varvára Pávlovna herself boiled the coffee in the mornings! But Lavrétzky was not then in a mood for observation: he was in a beatific state, he was intoxicating himself with

happiness; he gave himself up to it like a child. . . . And he was as innocent as a child, that young Alcides. Not in vain did witchery exhale from the whole being of his young wife; not in vain did she promise to the senses the secret luxury of unknown delights; she fulfilled more than she had promised. On arriving at Lavríki, in the very hottest part of the summer, she found the house dirty and dark, the servants ridiculous and antiquated, but she did not find it necessary even to hint at this to her husband. If she had been making preparations to settle down at Lavríki, she would have made over everything about it, beginning, of course, with the house; but the idea of remaining in that God-forsaken corner of the steppes never entered her mind for one moment; she lived in it, as though camping out, gently enduring all the inconveniences and making amusing jests over them. Márfa Timoféevna came to see her nursling; Varvára Pávlovna took a great liking for her, but she did not take a liking for Varvára Pávlovna. Neither did the new mistress of the house get on well with Glafíra Petróvna; she would have left her in peace, but old Koróbyn wanted to feather his nest from his son-in-law's affairs; "it was no shame, even for a General," said he, "to manage the estate of so near a relative." It must be assumed that Pável Petróvitch would not have disdained to busy himself with the estate of an entire stranger. Var-

vára Pávlovna conducted her attack in a very artful manner: without thrusting herself forward, and still, to all appearances, wholly absorbed in the felicity of the honeymoon, in quiet country life, in music and reading, she little by little drove Glafíra Petróvna to such a state, that one morning the latter rushed like a madwoman into Lavrétzky's study, and, hurling her bunch of keys on the table, announced that it was beyond her power to occupy herself with the housekeeping, and that she did not wish to remain in the country. Having been properly prepared in advance, Lavrétzky immediately consented to her departure. —Glafíra Petróvna had not expected this. "Very well," said she, and her eyes grew dark,—" I see that I am not wanted here! I know who it is that is driving me hence—from my native nest. But do thou remember my words, nephew: thou shalt never be able to build thyself a nest anywhere, thou must wander all thy life. That is my legacy to thee."—That very day she departed to her own little estate, and a week later General Koróbyn arrived, and with agreeable melancholy in his gaze and movements, took the management of the entire estate into his hands.

In September, Varvára Petróvna carried her husband off to Petersburg. She spent two winters in Petersburg (they removed to Tzárskoe Seló for the summer), in a beautiful, light, elegantly furnished apartment; they made many

acquaintances in middle-class and even in the higher circles of society, they went out and received a great deal, and gave most charming musical and dancing parties. Varvára Pávlovna attracted guests as a flame attracts moths. Such a dissipated life did not altogether please Feódor Iványitch. His wife advised him to enter the service; owing to his father's old memories, and his own conceptions, he would not serve, but to please his wife he remained in Petersburg. But he speedily divined that no one prevented his isolating himself, that it was not for nothing that he had the quietest and most comfortable study in all Petersburg, that his solicitous wife was even ready to help him to isolate himself,—and from that time forth all went splendidly. Once more he took up his own education, which, in his opinion, was unfinished, once more he began to read, he even began to study the English language. It was strange to see his mighty, broad-shouldered figure, eternally bent over his writing-table, his full, hairy, ruddy face half concealed by the pages of a dictionary or an exercise-book. Every morning he spent in work, dined capitally (Varvára Pávlovna was an excellent housewife), and in the evening he entered an enchanting, fragrant, brilliant world, all populated with young, merry faces,—and the central point of that world was also the zealous hostess, his wife. She gladdened him with the birth of a son, but the poor boy did

not live long: he died in the spring, and in the summer, by the advice of the physicians, Lavrétzky took his wife abroad, to the baths. Diversion was indispensable to her, after such a bereavement, and her health required a warm climate. They spent the summer and autumn in Germany and Switzerland, and in the winter, as might have been expected, they went to Paris. In Paris Varvára Pávlovna blossomed out like a rose, and managed to build a little nest for herself as promptly and as adroitly as in Petersburg. She found an extremely pretty apartment, in one of the quiet but fashionable Paris streets; she made her husband such a dressing-gown as he had never owned before; she hired a trim maid, a capital cook, a smart footman; she got an enchanting carriage, a charming little piano. A week had not passed before she crossed a street, wore her shawl, opened her parasol, and put on her gloves in a style equal to that of the purest-blooded Parisienne. And she soon provided herself with acquaintances. At first, only Russians went to her house, then Frenchmen began to make their appearance, very amiable, courteous, unmarried, with beautiful manners and euphonious family names; they all talked fast and much, bowed with easy grace, and screwed up their eyes in a pleasing way; all of them had white teeth which gleamed beneath rosy lips,—and how they did understand the art of smiling! Every one of

them brought his friends, and "la belle Madame de Lavretzki" soon became known from the Chaussée d'Antin to the Rue de Lille. In those days (this took place in 1836), that tribe of feuilleton and chronicle writers, which now swarm everywhere, like ants in an ant-hill which has been cut open, had not multiplied; but even then, a certain M—r Jules presented himself in Varvára Pávlovna's salon, a gentleman of insignificant appearance, with a scandalous reputation, insolent and base, like all duellists and beaten men. This M—r Jules was extremely repulsive to Varvára Pávlovna, but she received him because he scribbled for various journals, and incessantly alluded to her, calling her now *"Mme. de L * * * tzki,"* now *"Mme. de * * * cette grande dame Russe si distinguée, qui demeure rue de P.";* narrating to all the world, that is to say, to a few hundred subscribers, who cared nothing whatever about *"Mme. de L * * * tzki,"* how that pretty and charming lady was a real Frenchwoman in mind *(une vraie française par l'esprit)*,—there is no higher encomium for the French,—what a remarkable musician she was, and how wonderfully she waltzed (Varvára Pávlovna, in reality, did waltz in such a manner as to draw all hearts after the hem of her light, fluttering gown) . . . in a word, he spread her fame throughout the world, —and assuredly that is agreeable, say what you will. Mlle. Mars had already left the stage, and

Mlle. Rachel had not yet made her appearance; nevertheless, Varvára Pávlovna diligently frequented the theatres. She went into ecstasies over Italian music, and laughed at the ruins of Odra, yawned decorously at the Comédie Française, and wept at the acting of Mme. Dorval in some ultra-romantic melodrama or other; but, chief of all, Liszt played a couple of times at her house, and was so nice, so simple—it was delightful! In such pleasant sensations passed a winter, at the end of which Varvára Pávlovna was even presented at Court. Feódor Iványitch, on his side, was not bored, although life, at times, weighed heavily on his shoulders,—heavily, because it was empty. He read the newspapers, he listened to lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France, he kept track of the debates in parliament, he undertook the translation of a well-known scientific work on irrigation. "I am not wasting time,"—he said to himself,—"all this is useful; but next winter I must, without fail, return to Russia and set to work." It is difficult to say, whether he was clearly conscious in what that work consisted, and God knows whether he would have succeeded in returning to Russia for the winter,—in the meantime, he went with his wife to Baden-Baden. . . An unexpected event destroyed all his plans.

XVI

One day, on entering Varvára Pávlovna's boudoir in her absence, Lavrétzky beheld on the floor a tiny, carefully-folded scrap of paper. He mechanically picked it up, mechanically unfolded it, and read the following, written in French:

"Dear angel Betsy! (I cannot possibly bring myself to call thee Barbe or Varvára). I waited in vain for thee at the corner of the Boulevard; come to-morrow, at half-past one, to our little apartment. Thy good fatty *(ton gros bonhomme de mari)* generally buries himself in his books at that hour; again we will sing the song of your poet *Puskin (de votre poète Pouskine)* which thou hast taught me: 'Old husband, menacing husband!'—A thousand kisses on thy hands and feet! I await thee."

"Ernest."

Lavrétzky did not, on the instant, understand what sort of thing it was he had read; he perused it a second time—and his head reeled, the floor swayed beneath his feet, like the deck of a steamer when it is pitching—he cried out, and sobbed and wept simultaneously.

He lost his senses. He had so blindly trusted

his wife, that the possibility of deception, of treachery, had never presented itself to his mind. That Ernest, that lover of his wife's was a fair-haired, good-looking boy of three and twenty, with a small snub nose and thin moustache, almost the most insignificant of all her admirers. Several minutes passed, half an hour passed; Lavrétzky still stood, crushing the fatal missive in his hand and staring senselessly at the floor; through a sort of dark whirlwind, visions of pale faces flitted before him; his heart sank within him, in anguish; it seemed to him that he was falling, falling, falling . . . and that there was no end to it. The light, familiar rustle of a silken robe aroused him from his state of stupefaction; Varvára Pávlovna, in bonnet and shawl, had hastily returned from her stroll. Lavrétzky trembled all over, and rushed out of the room; he felt that at that moment he was capable of tearing her to pieces, of beating her until she was half dead, in peasant fashion, of strangling her with his hands. The astonished Varvára Pávlovna tried to stop him; he could only whisper: "Betsy"—and fled from the house.

Lavrétzky took a carriage, and ordered the man to drive him out of town. The entire remainder of the day, and the whole night long until the morning, he roamed about, incessantly halting and wringing his hands: now he raged, again it seemed rather ridiculous to him, even rather

amusing. In the morning he was chilled through, and entered a wretched suburban inn, asked for a room, and seated himself on a chair by the window. A convulsive yawning seized hold upon him. He could hardly stand on his feet, his body was exhausted,—but he was conscious of no fatigue,—yet fatigue claimed its rights: he sat and stared, and understood nothing; he did not understand what had happened to him, why he found himself alone, with benumbed limbs, with a bitterness in his mouth, with a stone on his breast, in a bare, strange room; he did not understand what had made her, Várya, give herself to that Frenchman, and how she had been able, knowing herself to be unfaithful, to be as calm, amiable, and confiding toward him as before! "I understand nothing!" whispered his parched lips. "Who will guarantee me now, that in Petersburg . . . ." And he did not finish the question, and yawned again, quivering and writhing all over. The bright and the dark memories tormented him equally; it suddenly occurred to him, that a few days previously, in his presence and in that of Ernest, she had seated herself at the piano and had sung: "Old husband, menacing husband!" He recalled the expression of her face, the strange glitter of her eyes, and the flush on her cheeks,—and he rose from his chair; he wanted to go and to say to them: "You have made a mistake in trifling with me; my great-

grandfather used to hang the peasants up by the ribs, and my grandfather himself was a peasant" —and kill them both. Then, all of a sudden, it seemed to him, that everything which was taking place with him was a dream, and not even a dream, but merely some nonsense or other: that all he had to do was to shake himself, to look about him. . . . He did look about him, and as the hawk buries his claws in the bird he has captured, anguish pierced more and more deeply into his heart. To crown all, Lavrétzky was hoping at the end of a few months to become a father. . . The past, the future, his whole life was poisoned. He returned, at last, to Paris, put up at a hotel, and sent Varvára Pávlovna the note of M—r Ernest, with the following letter:

"The accompanying document will explain everything to you. I will say to you, by the way, that I did not recognise you: you, always such a precise person, to drop such an important paper!" (This phrase poor Lavrétzky had prepared and cherished for the space of several hours.) "I can see you no more; I assume that you, also, cannot wish to meet me. I have assigned fifteen thousand francs a year to you; I cannot give more. Send your address to the office of the estate. Do what you will, live where you please. I wish you happiness. No answer is necessary."

Lavrétzky wrote to his wife, that no answer was necessary . . . but he waited, he thirsted for

an answer, an explanation of this incomprehensible, this incredible affair. Varvára Pávlovna, that very day, sent him a long letter in French. It made an end of him; his last doubts vanished, —and he felt ashamed that he had still cherished doubts. Varvára Pávlovna did not defend herself: she merely wished to see him, she entreated him not to condemn her irrevocably. The letter was cold and constrained, although the traces of tears were visible here and there. Lavrétzky uttered a bitter laugh, and bade the messenger say that it was all very good. Three days later, he had quitted Paris: but he went, not to Russia, but to Italy. He himself did not know why he had chosen Italy, in particular; in reality, it made no difference to him whither he went,—provided it were not home. He sent instructions to his peasant-steward in regard to his wife's pension, ordered him, at the same time, to take all matters pertaining to the estate instantly out of the hands of General Koróbyn, without awaiting the surrender of the accounts, and to make arrangements for the departure of His Excellency from Lavríki; he formed a vivid picture to himself, of the consternation, the fruitless haughtiness of the ejected General, and, with all his grief, he felt a certain malicious satisfaction. Then he invited Glafíra Petróvna, in a letter also, to return to Lavríki, and sent her a power of attorney. Glafíra Petróvna did not return to Lavríki,

and herself published in the newspapers that she had destroyed the power of attorney, which was quite superfluous. Hiding himself in a small Italian town, it was a long time still before Lavrétzky could force himself not to watch his wife. He learned from the newspapers, that she had quitted Paris, as it was supposed, for Baden-Baden: her name soon made its appearance in an article written by that same M'sieu Jules. In this article, a sort of friendly condolence pierced through the customary playfulness; Feódor Iványitch's soul was in a very ugly state when he read that article. Later on, he learned that a daughter had been born to him; at the end of a couple of months, he was informed by his peasant-steward, that Varvára Pávlovna had demanded the first third of her allowance. Then more and more evil reports began to arrive; at last, a tragi-comic tale made the rounds—creating a sensation—of the newspapers, wherein his wife played an unenviable part. All was at an end: Varvára Pávlovna had become " a celebrity."

Lavrétzky ceased to follow her career; but he was not able speedily to conquer himself. At times, he was seized with such a longing for his wife, that it seemed to him, he would give everything—he would even, if necessary . . . forgive her—if only he might again hear her caressing voice, again feel her hand in his hand. But time went on, and not in vain. He was not born to

be a martyr; his healthy nature asserted its rights. Much became clear to him; the very blow which had assailed him, no longer seemed to him unforeseen; he understood his wife,—one understands a person who is near to one, when parted from him. Again he was able to occupy himself, to work, although with far less zeal than of yore: scepticism, for which the way had been prepared by the experiences of life, by his education, definitively took possession of his soul. He became extremely indifferent to everything. Four years elapsed, and he felt himself strong enough to return to his native land, to meet his own people. Without halting either in Petersburg or Moscow, he arrived in the town of O * * * where we took leave of him, and whither we now beg the indulgent reader to return with us.

XVII

On the morning following the day which we have described, at nine o'clock, Lavrétzky ascended the porch of the Kalítin house. Liza emerged to meet him, in hat and gloves.

"Where are you going?" he asked her.

"To church. To-day is Sunday."

"And do you really care to go to the Liturgy?"

Liza said nothing, but gazed at him in amazement.

"Pardon me, please,"—said Lavrétzky,—"I . . . I did not mean to say that. I came to say good-bye to you: I am going to my country place an hour hence."

"It is not far from here, is it?"—inquired Liza.

"Twenty-five versts."

Lyénotchka made her appearance on the threshold of the door, accompanied by a maid.

"See that you do not forget us,"—said Liza, and descended the steps.

"And do not you forget me. And see here,"—he added,—"you are going to church: pray for me also, by the way."

Liza paused and turned toward him.

"Certainly,"—she said, looking him straight in

the face:—"I will pray for you. Come along, Lyénotchka."

Lavrétzky found Márya Dmítrievna alone in the drawing-room. An odour of eau de cologne and mint emanated from her. She had a headache, according to her own account, and she had passed a restless night. She welcomed him with her customary languid amiability, and gradually got to talking.

"What an agreeable young man Vladímir Nikoláitch is," she inquired:—"is he not?"

"What Vladímir Nikoláitch?"

"Why, Pánshin, you know,—the one who was here yesterday evening. He took an immense liking to you; I will tell you, as a secret, *mon cher cousin,* he is simply beside himself over my Liza. What do you think of that? He comes of a good family, he discharges his service splendidly, he is clever, well, and a Junior Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and if it be God's will . . . . I, on my side, as a mother, shall be very glad. It is a great responsibility, of course: up to the present time, whether it be for good or evil, you see, I am always, everywhere, entirely alone: I have reared my children, I have taught them, I have done everything . . . . and now I have ordered a governess from Mme. Bolius. . . . ."

Márya Dmítrievna launched out into a description of her toils, her efforts, and her maternal feelings. Lavrétzky listened to her in si-

lence, and twirled his hat in his hands. His cold, heavy gaze disconcerted the loquacious lady.

"And how do you like Liza?"—she asked.

"Lizavéta Mikhaílovna is an extremely beautiful girl,"—replied Lavrétzky, rose, bowed, and went to Márfa Timoféevna. Márya Dmítrievna gazed after him with displeasure, and said to herself: "What a dolt, what a peasant! Well, now I understand why his wife could not remain faithful to him."

Márfa Timoféevna was sitting in her own room, surrounded by her suite. It consisted of five beings, almost equally near to her heart: a fat-jowled trained bullfinch, which she loved because he had ceased to whistle and draw water; a tiny, very timorous and peaceable dog, Róska; an angry cat Matrós (Sailor); a black-visaged nimble little girl of nine, with huge eyes and a sharp little nose, who was named Schúrotchka; and an elderly woman, fifty years of age, in a white cap, and a light brown, bob-tailed jacket over a dark gown, by name Nastásya Kárpovna Ogárkoff. Schúrotchka was of the petty burgher class, a full orphan. Márfa Timoféevna had taken charge of her out of pity, as she had of Róska: she had picked up both the dog and the girl in the street; both were thin and hungry, both were being drenched by the autumnal rain, no one had hunted up Róska, and Schúrotchka's uncle, a drunken shoemaker, who had not enough

to eat himself, and who did not feed his niece, though he beat her over the head with his last, gladly surrendered her to Márfa Timoféevna. With Nastásya Kárpovna, Márfa Timoféevna had made acquaintance on a pilgrimage, in a monastery; she herself had gone up to her in church (Márfa Timoféevna liked her because, to use her own words, "she prayed tastily"), had herself begun the conversation, and had invited her to come to her for a cup of tea. From that day forth, she had never parted with her. Nastásya Kárpovna was a woman of the merriest and gentlest disposition, a childless widow, member of a poverty-stricken family of the petty nobility; she had a round, grey head, soft white hands, a soft face, with large, kindly features, and a rather ridiculous snub nose; she fairly worshipped Márfa Timoféevna, and the latter loved her greatly, although she jeered at her tender heart: Nastásya Kárpovna felt a weakness for all young people, and involuntarily blushed like a girl at the most innocent jest. Her entire capital consisted of twelve hundred paper rubles; she lived at the expense of Márfa Timoféevna, but on equal terms with her: Márfa Timoféevna would not have tolerated servility.

"Ah, Fédya!" she began, as soon as she caught sight of him:—"last night, thou didst not see my family: admire it. We are all assembled for tea; this is our second, feast-day tea. Thou mayest

pet all: only Schúrotchka will not allow thee, and the cat scratches. Art thou going away to-day?"

"Yes,"—Lavrétzky seated himself on a narrow little chair.—"I have already said farewell to Márya Dmítrievna. I have also seen Lizavéta Mikhaílovna."

"Call her Liza, my father,—why should she be Mikhaílovna to thee! And sit still, or thou wilt break Schúrotchka's chair."

"She has gone to church,"—pursued Lavrétzky. "Is she pious?"

"Yes, Fédya,—very. More than thou and I, Fédya."

"But are not you pious?"—remarked Nastásya Kárpovna, in a whisper. "And to-day: you did not get to the early Liturgy, but you will go to the later one."

"Not a bit of it—thou wilt go alone: I am lazy, my mother,"—retorted Márfa Timoféevna,—"I am pampering myself greatly with my tea."—She called Nastásya *thou,* although she lived on equal terms with her,—she was not a Péstoff for nothing: three Péstoffs are recorded with distinction in the Book of Remembrance of Iván Vasílievitch, the Terrible;[1] Márfa Timoféevna knew it.

[1] Ivan the Terrible left a long record of his distinguished victims, for the repose of whose souls he ordered prayers to be said in perpetuity. "Book of Remembrance" contains the names of persons who are to be prayed for at the general requiem services, and so forth.—TRANSLATOR.

"Tell me, please,"—began Lavrétzky again:—"Márya Dmítrievna has just been talking about that .... what 's his name .... Pánshin. What sort of a person is he?"

"What a chatterbox, the Lord forgive her!"—grumbled Márfa Timoféevna:—"I suppose she imparted to you, as a secret, what a fine suitor has turned up. She might do her whispering with her priest's son; but no, that is not enough for her. But there 's nothing in it, as yet, and thank God for that! but she 's babbling already."

"Why 'thank God'?"—asked Lavrétzky.

"Why, because the young fellow does not please me; and what is there to rejoice about?"

"He does not please you?"

"Yes, he cannot fascinate everybody. It 's enough that Nastásya Kárpovna here should be in love with him."

The poor widow was thoroughly startled.

"What makes you say that, Márfa Timoféevna? You do not fear God!"—she exclaimed, and a blush instantly suffused her face and neck.

"And he certainly knows the rogue,"—Márfa Timoféevna interrupted her:—"he knows how to captivate her: he presented her with a snuff-box. Fédya, ask her to give thee a pinch of snuff; thou wilt see what a splendid snuff-box it is: on the lid is depicted a hussar on horseback. Thou hadst better not defend thyself, my mother."

Nastásya Kárpovna merely repelled the suggestion with a wave of her hands.

"Well,"—inquired Lavrétzky,—"and is Liza not indifferent to him?"

"Apparently, she likes him,—however, the Lord only knows. Another man's soul, thou knowest, is a dark forest, much more the soul of a young girl. Now, there 's Schúrotchka's soul—try to dissect that! Why has she been hiding herself, and yet does not go away, ever since thou camest?"

Schúrotchka snorted with suppressed laughter and ran out of the room, and Lavrétzky rose from his seat.

"Yes,"—he said slowly:—"a maiden's soul is not to be divined."

He began to take leave.

"Well? Shall we see thee again soon?"—asked Márfa Timoféevna.

"That 's as it may happen, aunty; it is not far off."

"Yes, but thou art going to Vasílievskoe. Thou wilt not live at Lavríki:—well, that is thy affair; only, go and salute the tomb of thy mother, and the tomb of thy grandmother too, by the bye. Thou hast acquired all sorts of learning yonder abroad, and who knows, perchance they will feel it in their graves that thou hast come to them. And don't forget, Fédya, to have a requiem service celebrated for Glafíra Petróvna

also; here 's a silver ruble for thee. Take it, take it, I want to pay for having a requiem service for her. During her lifetime I did not like her, but there 's no denying it, the woman had plenty of character. She was a clever creature; and she did not wrong thee, either. And now go, with God's blessing, or thou wilt grow weary of me."

And Márfa Timoféevna embraced her nephew.

" And Liza shall not marry Pánshin,—don't worry about that; that 's not the sort of husband she deserves."

" Why, I am not worrying in the least," replied Lavrétzky, and withdrew.

XVIII

Four hours later, he was driving homeward. His tarantás rolled swiftly along the soft country road. There had been a drought for a fortnight; a thin milky cloud was diffused through the air, and veiled the distant forests; it reeked with the odour of burning. A multitude of small, dark cloudlets, with indistinctly delineated edges, were creeping across the pale-blue sky; a fairly strong wind was whisking along in a dry, uninterrupted stream, without dispelling the sultriness. Leaning his head against a cushion, and folding his arms on his breast, Lavrétzky gazed at the strips of ploughed land, in fan-shape, which flew past, at the willow-trees slowly flitting by, at the stupid crows and daws gazing with dull suspicion askance at the passing equipage, at the long strips of turf between the cultivated sections, overgrown with artemisia, wormwood, and wild tansy; he gazed . . . . and that fresh, fertile nakedness and wildness of the steppe, that verdure, those long hillocks, the ravines with stubby oak bushes, the grey hamlets, the flexible birch-trees,—this whole Russian picture, which he had not seen for a long time, wafted into his soul sweet and, at

the same time, painful sensations, weighed on his breast with a certain agreeable oppression. His thoughts slowly roved about; their outlines were as indistinct and confused as the outlines of those lofty cloudlets, which, also, seemed to be roving. He recalled his childhood, his mother; he remembered how she died, how they had carried him to her, and how she, pressing his head to her bosom, had begun to sing feebly over him, but had cast a glance at Glafíra Petróvna—and had relapsed into silence. He recalled his father, at first alert, dissatisfied with every one, and with a brazen voice,—then blind, tearful, and with a dirty grey beard; he recalled how, one day, at table, after drinking an extra glass of wine, and spilling the sauce over his napkin, he had suddenly burst out laughing, and had begun, winking his sightless eyes and flushing crimson, to tell stories of his conquests; he recalled Varvára Pávlovna,—and involuntarily screwed up his eyes, as a man does from momentary inward pain, and shook his head. Then his thoughts came to a pause on Liza.

"Here," he thought, "is a new being, who is only just entering upon life. A splendid young girl, what will become of her? She is comely. A pale, fresh face, such serious eyes and lips, and an honest and innocent gaze. It is a pity that she seems to be somewhat enthusiastic. A splendid figure, and she walks so lightly, and

her voice is soft. I greatly like to see her pause suddenly, listen attentively, without a smile, and then meditate, and toss back her hair. Really, it strikes me that Pánshin is not worthy of her. But what is there wrong about him? She will traverse the road which all traverse. I had better take a nap." And Lavrétzky closed his eyes.

He could not get to sleep, but plunged into the dreamy stupor of the road. Images of the past, as before, arose in leisurely fashion, floated through his soul, mingling and entangling themselves with other scenes. Lavrétzky, God knows why, began to think about Robert Peel . . . about French history . . . about how he would win a battle if he were a general; he thought he heard shots and shrieks. . . His head sank to one side, he opened his eyes. . . The same fields, the same views of the steppe; the polished shoes of the trace-horse flashed in turn through the billowing dust; the shirt of the postilion, yellow, with red gussets at the armpits, puffed out in the wind. . . . "A pretty way to return to my native land"—flashed through Lavrétzky's head; and he shouted: "Faster!" wrapped himself up in his cloak, and leaned back harder against his pillow. The tarantás gave a jolt: Lavrétzky sat upright, and opened his eyes wide. Before him, on a hillock, a tiny hamlet lay outspread; a little to the right, a small, ancient manor-house was to be seen, with closed shutters and a crooked

porch; all over the spacious yard, from the very gates, grew nettles, green and thick as hemp; there, also, stood a small oaken store-house, still sound. This was Vasílievskoe.

The postilion turned up to the gate, and brought the horses to a standstill; Lavrétzky's footman rose on the box, and, as though preparing to spring down, shouted: "Hey!" A hoarse, dull barking rang out, but not even the dog showed himself; the lackey again prepared to leap down, and again shouted: "Hey!" The decrepit barking was renewed, and, a moment later, a man ran out into the yard, no one could tell whence,—a man in a nankeen kaftan, with a head as white as snow; shielding his eyes with his hand, he stared at the tarantás, suddenly slapped himself on both thighs, at first danced about a little on one spot, then ran to open the gate. The tarantás drove into the yard, the wheels rustling against the nettles, and halted in front of the porch. The white-headed man, very nimble, to all appearances, was already standing, with his feet planted very wide apart and very crooked, on the last step; and having unbuttoned the apron, convulsively held up the leather and aided the master to descend to the earth, and then kissed his hand.

"Good-day, good-day, brother,"—said Lavrétzky,—"I think thy name is Antón? Thou art still alive?"

The old man bowed in silence, and ran to fetch the keys. While he was gone, the postilion sat motionless, bending sideways and gazing at the locked door; but Lavrétzky's lackey remained standing as he had sprung down, in a picturesque pose, with one hand resting on the box. The old man brought the keys, and quite unnecessarily writhing like a serpent, raising his elbows on high, he unlocked the door, stepped aside, and again bowed to his girdle.

"Here I am at home, here I have got back,"—said Lavrétzky to himself, as he entered the tiny anteroom, while the shutters were opened, one after the other, with a bang and a squeak, and the daylight penetrated into the deserted rooms.

XIX

The tiny house where Lavrétzky had arrived, and where, two years previously, Glafíra Petróvna had breathed her last, had been built in the previous century, out of sturdy pine lumber; in appearance it was decrepit, but was capable of standing another fifty years or more. Lavrétzky made the round of all the rooms, and, to the great discomfiture of the aged, languid flies, with white dust on their backs, who were sitting motionless under the lintels of the doors, he ordered all the windows to be opened; no one had opened them since the death of Glafíra Petróvna. Everything in the house remained as it had been: the small, spindle-legged couches in the drawing-room, covered with glossy grey material, worn through and flattened down, vividly recalled the days of Katherine II; in the drawing-room, also, stood the mistress's favourite chair, with a tall, straight back, against which, even in her old age, she had not leaned. On the principal wall hung an ancient portrait of Feódor's great-grandfather, Andréi Lavrétzky; the dark, sallow face was barely discernible against the warped and blackened background; the small, vicious eyes

gazed surlily from beneath pendent, swollen lids; the black hair, devoid of powder, rose in a brush over the heavy, deeply-seamed brow. On the corner of the portrait hung a wreath of dusty immortelles. "Glafíra Petróvna herself was pleased to weave it," announced Antón. In the bedchamber rose a narrow bed, under a tester of ancient, striped material, of very excellent quality; a mountain of faded pillows, and a thin quilted coverlet, lay on the bed, and by the head of the bed hung an image of the Presentation in the Temple of the All-Holy Birthgiver of God, the very same image to which the old spinster, as she lay dying alone and forgotten by every one, had pressed for the last time, her lips which were already growing cold. The toilet-table, of inlaid wood with brass trimmings and a crooked mirror with tarnished gilding, stood by the window. Alongside the bedroom was the room for the holy pictures, a tiny chamber, with bare walls and a heavy shrine of images in the corner; on the floor lay a small, threadbare rug, spotted with wax; Glafíra Petróvna had been wont to make her prostrations upon it. Antón went off with Lavrétzky's lackey to open the stable and carriage-house; in his stead, there presented herself an old woman, almost of the same age as he, with a kerchief bound round her head, down to her very brows; her head trembled, and her eyes gazed dully, but expressed zeal, and

a long-established habit of serving with assiduity, and, at the same time, a certain respectful commiseration. She kissed Lavrétzky's hand, and paused at the door, in anticipation of orders. He positively was unable to recall her name; he could not even remember whether he had ever seen her. It turned out that her name was Apraxyéya; forty years before, that same Glafíra Petróvna had banished her from the manor-house service, and had ordered her to attend to the fowls; however, she said little,—as though she had outlived her mind,—and only looked on cringingly. In addition to these two old people, and three pot-bellied brats in long shirts, Antón's great-grandchildren, there dwelt in the service-rooms of the manor a one-armed little old peasant, who was exempt from compulsory service; he made a drumming noise like a woodcock when he spoke, and was not capable of doing anything. Not much more useful than he was the decrepit dog, who had welcomed Lavrétzky's home-coming with his bark: it had already been fastened up for ten years with a heavy chain, bought by order of Glafíra Petróvna, and was barely in a condition to move and drag its burden. After inspecting the house, Lavrétzky went out into the park, and was satisfied with it. It was all overgrown with tall grass, burdock, and gooseberry and raspberry bushes; but there was much shade in it: there were many old linden-trees, which surprised

the beholder by their huge size and the strange arrangement of their branches; they had been too closely planted, and at some time or other—a hundred years before—had been pollarded. The park ended in a small, clear pond, with a rim of tall, reddish reeds. The traces of human life fade away very quickly: Glafíra Petróvna's farm had not succeeded in running wild, but it already seemed plunged in that tranquil dream wherewith everything on earth doth dream, where the restless infection of people does not exist. Feódor Iványitch also strolled through the village; the women stared at him from the thresholds of their cottages, each with her cheek propped on one hand; the peasant men saluted him from afar; the children ran away; the dogs barked indifferently. At last he felt hungry, but he did not expect his servants and cook until toward evening; the cart with provisions from Lavríki had not yet arrived, —he was compelled to appeal to Antón. Antón immediately arranged matters: he caught an old hen, cut its throat, and plucked it; Apraxyéya rubbed and scrubbed it for a long time, and washed it, like linen, before she placed it in the stew-pan; when, at last, it was cooked, Antón put on the table-cloth and set the table, placed in front of the plate a blackened salt-cellar of plated ware on three feet, and a small faceted carafe with a round glass stopper and a narrow neck; then he announced to Lavrétzky, in a chanting

voice, that the meal was ready,—and took up his post behind his chair, having wound a napkin around his right fist, and disseminating some strong, ancient odour, which resembled the odour of cypress wood. Lavrétzky tasted the soup, and came upon the hen; its skin was all covered with big pimples, a thick tendon ran down each leg, its flesh had a flavour of charcoal and lye. When he had finished his dinner, Lavrétzky said that he would like some tea, if . . . . . " This very moment, sir, I will serve it, sir,"—interrupted the old man, —and he kept his promise. A pinch of tea was hunted up, wrapped in a scrap of red paper, a small but very mettlesome and noisy samovár was searched out, also sugar, in very tiny bits, that seemed to have been melted around the edges. Lavrétzky drank his tea out of a large cup; he remembered that cup in his childhood: playing-cards were depicted on it, only visitors drank out of it,—and he now drank out of it, like a visitor. Toward evening, his servants arrived; Lavrétzky did not wish to sleep in his aunt's bed; he gave orders that a bed should be made up for him in the dining-room. Extinguishing the candle, he stared about him for a long time, and meditated on cheerless thoughts; he experienced the sensation familiar to every man who chances to pass the night, for the first time, in a place which has long been uninhabited; it seemed to him that the darkness which surrounded him on

all sides could not accustom itself to the new inhabitant, that the very walls of the house were waxing indignant. At last he sighed, drew the coverlet up over him, and fell asleep. Antón remained afoot longer than the rest; for a long time he whispered with Apraxyéya, groaned in a low tone, and crossed himself a couple of times. Neither of them expected that the master would settle down among them at Vasílievskoe, when, near at hand, he owned such a magnificent estate, with a capitally-organised manor-house; they did not even suspect that it was precisely that manor-house which was repugnant to Lavrétzky: it evoked in him oppressive memories. After having whispered his fill, Antón took his staff, and beat upon the board at the store-house which had long been hanging silent,[1] and immediately lay down for a nap in the yard, without covering up his grey head with anything. The May night was tranquil and caressing—and the old man slumbered sweetly.

[1] It is the duty of the night-watchman to beat upon the board at regular intervals, to show that he is vigilant.—Translator.

XX

The next morning Lavrétzky rose quite early, had a talk with the overseer, visited the threshing-floor, ordered the chain to be removed from the watch-dog, who only barked a little, but did not even move away from his kennel;—and on his return home, sank into a sort of peaceful torpor, from which he did not emerge all day. "I have sunk down to the very bottom of the river now," he said to himself more than once. He sat by the window, made no movement, and seemed to be listening to the current of tranquil life which surrounded him, to the infrequent noises of the country solitudes. Yonder, somewhere beyond the nettles, some one began to sing, in the shrillest of voices; a gnat seemed to be chiming in with the voice. Now it ceased, but the gnat still squeaked on; athwart the energetic, insistently-plaintive buzzing of the flies resounded the booming of a fat bumble-bee, which kept bumping its head against the ceiling; a cock on the road began to crow, hoarsely prolonging the last note; a peasant cart rumbled past; the gate toward the village creaked. "Well?" suddenly quavered a woman's voice.—"Okh, thou my dear little sweet-

heart," said Antón to a little girl of two years, whom he was dandling in his arms. "Fetch some kvas," repeats the same female voice,—and all at once a deathlike silence ensues; nothing makes any noise, nothing stirs; the breeze does not flutter a leaf; the swallows dart along near the ground, one after the other, without a cry, and sadness descends upon the soul from their silent flight.—"Here I am, sunk down to the bottom of the river," Lavrétzky says to himself again.—"And life is at all times tranquil, leisurely here," he thinks:—"whoever enters its circle must become submissive: here there is nothing to agitate one's self about, nothing to disturb; here success awaits only him who lays out his path without haste, as the husbandman lays the furrow with his plough." And what strength there is all around, what health there is in this inactive calm! Yonder now, under the window, a sturdy burdock is making its way out from among the thick grass; above it, the lovage is stretching forth its succulent stalk, the Virgin's-tears [1] toss still higher their rosy tendrils; and yonder, further away, in the fields, the rye is gleaming, and the oats are beginning to shoot up their stalks, and every leaf on every tree, every blade of grass on its stalk, spreads itself out to its fullest extent. "My best years have been spent on the love of a woman,"

[1] This plant bears round seed-pods of mottled-grey, which are often used to make very pretty rosaries.—TRANSLATOR.

Lavrétzky pursued his meditations:—" may the irksomeness here sober me, may it soothe me, prepare me so that I may understand how to do my work without haste "; and again he began to lend an ear to the silence, expecting nothing,—and, at the same time, as it were incessantly expecting something: the silence enfolds him on all sides, the sun glides quietly across the calm blue sky, a cloud floats gently in its wake; it seems as though they know whither and why they are floating. At that same moment, in other spots on earth, life was seething, bustling, roaring; here the same life was flowing on inaudibly, like water amid marsh-grass; and until the very evening, Lavrétzky could not tear himself from the contemplation of that life fleeting, flowing onward; grief for the past melted in his soul like snows of springtime,—and, strange to say!—never had the feeling of his native land been so deep and strong within him.

XXI

In the course of a fortnight, Feódor Iványitch brought Glafíra Petróvna's little house into order; cleaned up the yard, the garden; comfortable furniture was brought to him from Lavríki, wine, books, newspapers from the town; horses made their appearance in the stables; in a word, Feódor Iványitch provided himself with everything that was necessary and began to live—not exactly like a country squire, nor yet exactly like a recluse. His days passed monotonously, but he was not bored, although he saw no one; he occupied himself diligently and attentively with the farming operations, he rode about the neighbourhood on horseback, he read. He read but little, however: it was more agreeable for him to listen to the tales of old Antón. As a rule, Lavrétzky would seat himself with a pipe of tobacco and a cup of cold tea near the window; Antón would stand near the door, with his hands clasped behind him, and begin his leisurely stories of olden times,—of those fabulous times—when the oats and barley were sold not by measures but by huge sacks, at two or three kopéks the sack; when in all directions, even close to the town, stretched im-

penetrable forests, untouched steppes. "And now," wailed the old man, who was already over eighty years of age:—"they have felled and ploughed up everything until there is no place to drive through." Antón, also, related many things concerning his mistress Glafíra Petróvna: how sagacious and economical she had been; how a certain gentleman, a youthful neighbour, had attempted to gain her good-will, had taken to calling frequently,—and how she had been pleased, for his benefit, even to don her cap with rose-purple ribbons, and her yellow gown of tru-tru levantine; but how, later on, having flown into a rage with her neighbour, on account of the unseemly question: "What might your capital amount to, madam?" she had given orders that he should not be admitted, and how she had then commanded, that everything, down to the very smallest scrap, should be given to Feódor Ivánitch after her death. And, in fact, Lavrétzky found all his aunt's effects intact, not excepting the festival cap, with the rose-purple ribbons, and the gown of yellow tru-tru levantine. The ancient papers and curious documents, which Lavrétzky had counted upon, proved not to exist, with the exception of one tattered little old book, in which his grandfather, Piótr Andréitch, had jotted down, now—"Celebration in the city of Saint Petersburg of the peace concluded with the Turkish Empire by his Illustriousness Prince Alexán-

der Alexándrovitch Prozorósvky"; now a recipe for a decoction for the chest, with the comment: "This instruction was given to Generaless Praskóvya Feódorovna Saltykóff, by Feódor Avkséntievitch, Archpriest of the Church of the Life-giving Trinity"; again, some item of political news, like the following: "In the '*Moscow News,*' it is announced that Premier-Major Mikhaíl Petróvitch Kolýtcheff has died. Was not he the son of Piótr Vasílievitch Kolýtcheff?" Lavrétzky also found several ancient calendars and dream-books, and the mystical works of Mr. Ambódik; many memories were awakened in him by the long-forgotten but familiar "Symbols and Emblems." In Glafíra Petróvna's toilet-table Lavrétzky found a small packet, tied with black ribbon, and sealed with black wax, thrust into the remotest recesses of the drawer. In the packet, face to face, lay a pastel portrait of his father in his youth, with soft curls tumbling over his brow, with long, languid eyes, and mouth half opened,—and the almost effaced portrait of a pale woman in a white gown, with a white rose in her hand,—his mother. Glafíra Petróvna had never permitted her own portrait to be made.—"Dear little father Feódor Iványtch,"—Antón was wont to say to Lavrétzky:—"although I did not then have my residence in the manor-house of the masters, yet I remember your great-grandfather, Andréi Afanásievitch,—that I do; I was

eighteen years of age when he died. Once I met him in the garden,—my very hamstrings shook; but he did nothing, only inquired my name,—and sent me to his chamber for a pocket-handkerchief. He was a real gentleman, there 's no gainsaying that,—and he recognised no superior over him. For I must inform you, that your great-grandfather had a wonderful amulet,—a monk from Mount Athos gave him that amulet. And that monk said to him: ' I give thee this for thine affability, Boyárin; wear it—and fear not fate.' Well, and of course, dear little father, you know, what sort of times those were; what the master took a notion to do, that he did. Once in a while, some one, even one of the gentry, would take it into his head to thwart him; but no sooner did he look at him, than he would say: ' You 're sailing in shoal water '—that was his favourite expression. And he lived, your great-grandfather of blessed memory, in a tiny wooden mansion; but what property he left behind him, what silver, and all sorts of supplies,—all the cellars were filled to the brim! He was a master. That little carafe, which you were pleased to praise,—belonged to him: he drank vódka from it. And then your grandfather, Piótr Ivánitch, built himself a stone mansion; but he acquired no property; with him everything went at sixes and sevens; and he lived worse than his papa, and got no pleasure for himself,—but

wasted all the money, and there was none to pay for requiems for his soul; he left not even a silver spoon behind him, so it was lucky that Glafíra Petróvna brought things into order."

"And is it true,"—Lavrétzky interrupted him,—"that she was called an ill-tempered old hag?"

"Why, surely, some did call her that!"—returned Antón, in displeasure.

"Well, little father,"—the old man one day summoned the courage to ask;—"and how about our young mistress; where is she pleased to have her residence?"

"I have separated from my wife,"—said Lavrétzky, with an effort:—"please do not inquire about her."

"I obey, sir,"—replied the old man, sadly.

After the lapse of three weeks, Lavrétzky rode into O * * * on horseback, to the Kalítins', and passed the evening with them. Lemm was there; Lavrétzky conceived a great liking for him. Although, thanks to his father, he did not play on any instrument, yet he was passionately fond of music,—intelligent, classical music. Pánshin was not at the Kalítins' that evening. The Governor had sent him off somewhere, out of town. Liza played alone, and with great precision; Lemm grew animated, excited, rolled a piece of paper into a baton, and beat time. Márya Dmítrievna laughed, at first, as she watched him, and then

went off to bed; as she said, Beethoven was too agitating for her nerves. At midnight, Lavrétzky escorted Lemm to his lodgings, and sat with him until three o'clock in the morning. Lemm talked a great deal; his bent shoulders straightened up, his eyes opened widely and sparkled; his very hair stood upright above his brow. It was such a very long time since any one had taken an interest in him, but Lavrétzky evidently did take an interest, and interrogated him solicitously and attentively. This touched the old man; he ended by showing his visitor his music, he even played and sang to him, with his ghost of a voice, several selections from his compositions,—among others, the whole of Schiller's ballad "Fridolin," which he had set to music. Lavrétzky lauded it, made him repeat portions of it, and invited him to visit him for a few days. Lemm, who was escorting him to the street, immediately accepted, and shook his hand warmly; but when he was left alone, in the cool, damp air of the day which was just beginning to dawn, he glanced around him, screwed up his eyes, writhed, and went softly to his tiny chamber, like a guilty creature: "Ich bin wohl nicht klug" (I 'm not in my right mind),—he muttered, as he lay down on his hard, short bed. He tried to assert that he was ill when, a few days later, Lavrétzky came for him in a calash; but Feódor Ivánitch went to him, in his room, and persuaded

him. The circumstance which operated most powerfully of all on Lemm was, that Lavrétzky had ordered a piano to be sent to his country-house from the town: a piano for his—Lemm's—use. Together they went to the Kalítins', and spent the evening, but not so agreeably as on the former occasion. Pánshin was there, had a great deal to narrate about his journey, and very amusingly mimicked and illustrated in action the country squires he had seen; Lavrétzky laughed, but Lemm did not emerge from his corner, maintained silence, quietly quivered all over like a spider, looked glum and dull, and grew animated only when Lavrétzky began to take his leave. Even when he was seated in the calash, the old man continued to be shy and to fidget; but the quiet, warm air, the light breeze, the delicate shadows, the perfume of the grass, of the birch buds, the peaceful gleam of the starry, moonless heaven, the energetic hoof-beats and snorting of the horses, all the charms of the road, of spring, of night,—descended into the heart of the poor German, and he himself was the first to address Lavrétzky.

XXII

He began to talk of music, of Liza, then again of music. He seemed, somehow, to utter his words more slowly when he spoke of Liza. Lavrétzky turned the conversation on his compositions, and, half in jest, proposed to write a libretto for him.

"H'm, a libretto!"—rejoined Lemm:—"no, that is beyond me: I have not that animation, that play of fancy, which is indispensable for an opera; I have already lost my powers. . . . . But if I could still do something,—I would be satisfied with a romance; of course, I should like some good words. . . ."

He relapsed into silence, and sat for a long time motionless, with his eyes raised heavenward.

"For example," he said at last:—"something of this sort: 'Ye stars, O ye pure stars'?" . . .

Lavrétzky turned his face slightly toward him and began to stare at him.

"'Ye stars, ye pure stars,'"—repeated Lemm. . . . "'Ye gaze alike upon the just and upon the guilty . . . . but only the innocent of heart,'—or something of that sort . . . 'understand you,' that is to say, no,—'love you.' However, I am

not a poet . . how should I be! But something in that style, something lofty."

Lemm pushed his hat back on the nape of his neck; in the delicate gloom of the light night, his face seemed whiter and more youthful.

"'And ye also,'"—he went on, with a voice which gradually grew quieter:—"'ye know who loves, who knows how to love, for ye are pure, ye, alone, can comfort.' . . . No, that's not right yet! I am not a poet,"—he said:—"but something of that sort. . . ."

"I regret that I am not a poet,"—remarked Lavrétzky.

"Empty visions!" retorted Lemm, and huddled in the corner of the calash. He closed his eyes, as though preparing to go to sleep.

Several moments elapsed. . . . Lavrétzky listened. . . . "'Stars, pure stars, love,'"—the old man was whispering.

"Love,"—Lavrétzky repeated to himself, became thoughtful, and his soul grew heavy within him.

"You have written some very beautiful music for 'Fridolin,' Christofór Feódoritch,"—he said aloud:—"and what think you; did that Fridolin, after the Count had led him to his wife, become her lover—hey?"

"That is what you think,"—returned Lemm: "because, probably, experience . . . ." He suddenly fell silent, and turned away in confusion.

Lavrétzky laughed in a constrained way, turned away also, and began to stare along the road.

The stars had already begun to pale, and the sky was grey, when the calash rolled up to the porch of the little house at Vasílievskoe. Lavrétzky conducted his guest to the chamber which had been assigned to him, returned to his study, and sat down by the window. In the park, a nightingale was singing its last lay before the dawn. Lavrétzky remembered that a nightingale had been singing in the Kalítins' garden also; he recalled, too, the tranquil movement of Liza's eyes when, at the first sounds of it, they had turned toward the dark window. He began to think of her, and his heart grew calm within him. "Pure little star,"—he said to himself, in a low tone:—"pure stars,"—he added, with a smile, and calmly lay down to sleep.

But Lemm sat, for a long time, on his bed, with a book of music-paper on his knees. It seemed as though a strange, sweet melody were about to visit him: he was already burning and growing agitated, he already felt the lassitude and sweetness of its approach . . . but it did not come.

"I am not a poet, and not a musician!"—he whispered at last. . . . .

And his weary head sank back heavily on the pillow.

XXIII

On the following morning, host and guest drank tea in the garden, under an ancient linden-tree.

"Maestro!"—said Lavrétsky, among other things:—"you will soon have to compose a triumphal cantata."

"On what occasion?"

"On the occasion of the marriage of Mr. Pánshin to Liza. Did you notice how he was paying court to her last evening? It seems as though everything were going smoothly with them."

"That shall not be!" exclaimed Lemm.

"Why not?"

"Because it is impossible. However,"—he added, after a pause:—"everything is possible in this world. Especially here, with you, in Russia."

"Let us leave Russia out of the question for the present; but what evil do you see in that marriage?"

"All is evil, all. Lizavéta Mikhaílovna is an upright, serious maiden, with exalted sentiments,—but he . . . . . he is a di-let-tante, in one word."

"But surely she loves him?"

Lemm rose from the bench.

"No, she does not love him, that is to say, she is very pure in heart, and does not know herself what 'love' means. Madam von Kalítin tells her, that he is a nice young man, and she listens to Madam von Kalítin, because she is still a perfect child, although she is nineteen years of age: she says her prayers in the morning, she says her prayers in the evening,—and that is very praiseworthy; but she does not love him. She can love only the fine, but he is not fine; that is, his soul is not fine."

Lemm uttered this whole speech coherently and with fervour, pacing back and forth, with short strides, in front of the tea-table, and with his eyes flitting over the ground.

"My dearest Maestro!"—exclaimed Lavrétzky all at once:—"it strikes me, that you are in love with my cousin yourself."

Lemm came to a sudden halt.

"Please,"—he began in an uncertain voice:—"do not jest thus with me. I am not a lunatic."

Lavrétzky felt sorry for the old man; he entreated his forgiveness. After tea, Lemm played him his cantata, and at dinner, being instigated thereto by Lavrétzky himself, he again began to talk about Liza. Lavrétzky listened to him with attention and curiosity.

"What think you, Christofór Feódoritch,"—

he said at last—"everything appears to be in order with us now, the garden is in full bloom. . . . . Shall not we invite her here for the day, together with her mother and my old aunt,—hey? Would that be agreeable to you?"

Lemm bent his head over his plate.

"Invite her,"—he said, almost inaudibly.

"And Pánshin need not be asked?"

"He need not,"—replied the old man, with a half-childlike smile.

Two days later, Feódor Iványitch set out for the town, to the Kalítins.

XXIV

He found them all at home, but he did not immediately announce to them his intention: he wished, first, to have a talk alone with Liza. Chance aided him: they were left alone together in the drawing-room. They fell into conversation: she had succeeded in getting used to him,—and, in general, she was not shy of any one. He listened to her, looked her straight in the face, and mentally repeated Lemm's words, and agreed with him. It sometimes happens, that two persons who are already acquainted, but not intimate, suddenly and swiftly draw near to each other in the course of a few minutes,—and the consciousness of this approach is immediately reflected in their glances, in their friendly, quiet smiles, in their very movements. Precisely this is what took place with Lavrétzky and Liza. "So that 's what he is like," she thought, gazing caressingly at him; "so that 's what thou art like," he said to himself also. And therefore, he was not greatly surprised when she, not without a slight hesitation, however, announced to him, that she had long had it in her heart to say something to him, but had been afraid of annoying him.

"Have no fear; speak out,"—he said, and halted in front of her.

Liza raised her clear eyes to his.

"You are so kind,"—she began, and, at the same time, she said to herself:—"'yes, he really is kind' . . . you will pardon me, but I ought not to speak of this to you . . . . but how could you . . . why did you separate from your wife?"

Lavrétzky shuddered, glanced at Liza, and seated himself beside her.

"My child," he began,—"please do not touch that wound; your hands are tender, but nevertheless I shall suffer pain."

"I know,"—went on Liza, as though she had not heard him:—"she is culpable toward you, I do not wish to defend her; but how is it possible to put asunder that which God has joined together?"

"Our convictions on that point are too dissimilar, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna,"—said Lavrétzky, rather sharply;—"we shall not understand each other."

Liza turned pale; her whole body quivered slightly; but she did not hold her peace.

"You ought to forgive,"—she said softly:—"if you wish to be forgiven."

"Forgive!"—Lavrétzky caught her up:—"Ought not you first to know for whom you are pleading? Forgive that woman, take her back into my house,—her,—that empty, heartless crea-

ture! And who has told you, that she wishes to return to me? Good heavens, she is entirely satisfied with her position. . . . . But what is the use of talking about it! Her name ought not to be uttered by you. You are too pure, you are not even in a position to understand what sort of a being she is."

"Why vilify her?"—said Liza, with an effort. The trembling of her hands became visible. "It was you yourself who abandoned her, Feódor Iványitch."

"But I tell you,"—retorted Lavrétzky, with an involuntary outburst of impatience:—"that you do not know what sort of a creature she is!"

"Then why did you marry her?"—whispered Liza, and dropped her eyes.

Lavrétzky sprang up hastily from his seat.

"Why did I marry? I was young and inexperienced then; I was deceived, I was carried away by a beautiful exterior. I did not know women, I did not know anything. God grant that you may make a happier marriage! But, believe me, it is impossible to vouch for anything."

"And I may be just as unhappy,"—said Liza (her voice began to break): "but, in that case, I must submit; I do not know how to talk, but if we do not submit . . ."

Lavrétzky clenched his fists and stamped his foot.

"Be not angry; forgive me!"—ejaculated Liza, hastily.

At that moment, Márya Dmítrievna entered. Liza rose, and started to leave the room.

"Stop!"—Lavrétzky unexpectedly called after her. "I have a great favour to ask of your mother and of you: make me a visit to celebrate my new home. You know, I have set up a piano; Lemm is staying with me; the lilacs are now in bloom; you will get a breath of the country air, and can return the same day,—do you accept?"

Liza glanced at her mother, and Márya Dmítrievna assumed an air of suffering, but Lavrétzky, without giving her a chance to open her mouth, instantly kissed both her hands. Márya Dmítrievna, who was always susceptible to endearments, and had not expected such amiability from "the dolt," was touched to the soul, and consented. While she was considering what day to appoint, Lavrétzky approached Liza, and, still greatly agitated, furtively whispered to her: "Thank you, you are a good girl, I am to blame." . . . . And her pale face flushed crimson with a cheerful—bashful smile; her eyes also smiled,—up to that moment, she had been afraid that she had offended him.

"May Vladímir Nikoláitch go with us?"—asked Márya Dmítrievna.

"Certainly,"—responded Lavrétzky:—"but

would it not be better if we confined ourselves to our own family circle?"

"Yes, certainly, but you see . . . ." Márya Dmítrievna began. "However, as you like," she added.

It was decided to take Lyénotchka and Schúrotchka. Márfa Timoféevna declined to make the journey.

"It is too hard for me, my dear,"—she said,—"my old bones ache: and I am sure there is no place at your house where I can spend the night; and I cannot sleep in a strange bed. Let these young people do the gallivanting."

Lavrétzky did not succeed in being alone again with Liza; but he looked at her in such a way, that she felt at ease, and rather ashamed, and sorry for him. On taking leave of her, he pressed her hand warmly; when she was left alone, she fell into thought.

XXV

When Lavrétzky reached home, he was met on the threshold of the drawing-room by a tall, thin man, in a threadbare blue coat, with frowzy grey side-whiskers, a long, straight nose, and small, inflamed eyes. This was Mikhalévitch, his former comrade at the university. Lavrétzky did not recognise him at first, but embraced him warmly as soon as he mentioned his name. They had not seen each other since the Moscow days. There was a shower of exclamations, of questions; long-smothered memories came forth into the light of day. Hurriedly smoking pipe after pipe, drinking down tea in gulps, and flourishing his long arms, Mikhalévitch narrated his adventures to Lavrétzky; there was nothing very cheerful about them, he could not boast of success in his enterprises,—but he laughed incessantly, with a hoarse, nervous laugh. A month previously, he had obtained a situation in the private counting-house of a wealthy distiller, about three hundred versts from the town of O * * *, and, on learning of Lavrétzky's return from abroad, he had turned aside from his road, in order to see

his old friend. Mikhalévitch talked as abruptly as in his younger days, was as noisy and effervescent as ever. Lavrétzky was about to allude to his circumstances, but Mikhalévitch interrupted him, hastily muttering: "I 've heard, brother, I 've heard about it,—who could have anticipated it?"—and immediately turned the conversation into the region of general comments.

"I, brother,"—he said:—"must leave thee to-morrow; to-day, thou must excuse me—we will go to bed late—I positively must find out what are thy opinions, convictions, what sort of a person thou hast become, what life has taught thee." (Mikhalévitch still retained the phraseology of the '30s.) "So far as I myself am concerned, I have changed in many respects, brother: the billows of life have fallen upon my breast,—who the dickens was it that said that?—although, in important, essential points, I have not changed; I believe, as of yore, in the good, in the truth; but I not only believe,—I am now a believer, yes—I am a believer, a religious believer. Hearken, thou knowest that I write verses; there is no poetry in them, but there is truth. I will recite to thee my last piece: in it I have given expression to my most sincere convictions. Listen."—Mikhalévitch began to recite a poem; it was rather long, and wound up with the following lines:

"To new feeling I have surrendered myself with all my heart,
I have become like a child in soul:
And I have burned all that I worshipped.
I have worshipped all that I burned."

As he declaimed these last two lines, Mikhalévitch was on the verge of tears; slight convulsive twitchings, the signs of deep feeling—flitted across his broad lips, his ugly face lighted up. Lavrétzky listened and listened to him; the spirit of contradiction began to stir within him: the ever-ready, incessantly-seething enthusiasm of the Moscow student irritated him. A quarter of an hour had not elapsed, before a dispute flared up between them, one of those interminable disputes, of which only Russians are capable. After a separation of many years' duration, spent in two widely-different spheres, understanding clearly neither other people's thoughts nor their own,—cavilling at words and retorting with mere words, they argued about the most abstract subjects,—and argued as though it were a matter of life and death to both of them: they shouted and yelled so, that all the people in the house took fright, and poor Lemm, who, from the moment of Mikhalévitch's arrival, had locked himself up in his room, became bewildered, and began, in a confused way, to be afraid.

"But what art thou after this? disillusioned?"

—shouted Mikhalévitch at one o'clock in the morning.

"Are there any such disillusioned people?"—retorted Lavrétzky:—"they are all poor and ill,—and I 'll pick thee up with one hand, shall I?"

"Well, if not a *disillusioned* man, then a *sceptuik,* and that is still worse." (Mikhalévitch's pronunciation still smacked of his native Little Russia.) "And what right hast thou to be a sceptic? Thou hast had bad luck in life, granted; that was no fault of thine: thou wert born with a passionate, loving soul, and thou wert forcibly kept away from women: the first woman that came in thy way was bound to deceive thee."

"And she did deceive me,"—remarked Lavrétzky, gloomily.

"Granted, granted; I was the instrument of fate there,—but what nonsense am I talking?—there 's no fate about it; it 's merely an old habit of expressing myself inaccurately. But what does that prove?"

"It proves, that they dislocated me in my childhood."

"But set thy joints! to that end thou art a human being, a man; thou hast no need to borrow energy! But, at any rate, is it possible, is it permissible, to erect a private fact, so to speak, into a general law, into an immutable law?"

"Where is the rule?"—interrupted Lavrétzky,—"I do not admit . . ."

"Yes, it is thy rule, thy rule," Mikhalévitch interrupted him in his turn. . . .

"Thou art an egoist, that 's what thou art!" —he thundered, an hour later:—"thou hast desired thine own personal enjoyment, thou hast desired happiness in life, thou hast desired to live for thyself alone. . . ."

"What dost thou mean by personal enjoyment?"

"And everything has deceived thee; everything has crumbled away beneath thy feet."

"What is personal enjoyment,—I ask thee?"

"And it was bound to crumble. For thou hast sought support where it was not to be found, for thou hast built thy house on a quicksand. . ."

"Speak more plainly, without metaphors, because I do not understand thee."

"Because,—laugh if it pleases thee,—because there is no faith in thee, no warmth of heart; mind, merely a farthing mind; thou art simply a pitiful, lagging Voltairian—that 's what thou art!"

"Who—I am a Voltairian?"

"Yes, just the same sort as thy father was, and dost not suspect it thyself."

"After that,"—cried Lavrétzky,—"I have a right to say that thou art a fanatic!"

"Alas!"—returned Mikhalévitch, with contrition:—"unhappily, as yet I have in no way earned so lofty an appellation. . ."

"Now I have discovered what to call thee,"—shouted this same Mikhalévitch, at three o'clock in the morning;—"thou art not a sceptic, not a disillusioned man, not a Voltairian,—thou art a trifler, and thou art an evil-minded trifler, a conscious trifler, not an ingenuous trifler. Ingenuous triflers lie around on the oven and do nothing, because they do not know how to do anything; and they think of nothing. But thou art a thinking man,—and thou liest around; thou mightest do something—and thou dost nothing; thou liest with thy well-fed belly upward and sayest: 'It is proper to lie thus, because everything that men do is nonsense, and twaddle which leads to nothing.'"

"But what makes thee think that I trifle,"—insisted Lavrétzky:—"why dost thou assume such thoughts on my part?"

"And more than that, all of you, all the people of your sort,"—pursued the obstreperous Mikhalévitch:—"are erudite triflers. You know on what foot the German limps, you know what is bad about the English and the French,—and your knowledge comes to your assistance, justifies your shameful laziness, your disgusting inactivity. Some men will even pride themselves, and say, 'What a clever fellow I am!—I lie around, but the others, the fools, bustle about.' Yes!—And there are such gentlemen among us,—I am not saying this with reference to thee, however,—

who pass their whole lives in a sort of stupor of tedium, grow accustomed to it, sit in it like . . . . like a mushroom in sour cream," Mikhalévitch caught himself up, and burst out laughing at his own comparison.—" Oh, that stupor of tedium is the ruin of the Russians! The repulsive trifler, all his life long, is getting ready to work. . . . . ."

" Come, what art thou calling names for? "—roared Lavrétzky, in his turn.—" Work . . . act . . . Tell me, rather, what to do, but don't call names, you Poltáva Demosthenes! "

" Just see what a freak he has taken! I 'll not tell thee that, brother; every one must know that himself," retorted Demosthenes, ironically.—" A landed proprietor, a nobleman—and he does n't know what to do! Thou hast no faith, or thou wouldst know; thou hast no faith—and there is no revelation."

" Give me a rest, at any rate, you devil: give me a chance to look around me,"—entreated Lavrétzky.

" Not a minute, not a second of respite! "—retorted Mikhalévitch, with an imperious gesture of the hand.—" Not one second!—Death does not wait, and life ought not to wait." . . .

" And when, where did men get the idea of becoming triflers? "—he shouted, at four o'clock in the morning, but his voice had now begun to be rather hoarse: " among us! now! in Russia! when on every separate individual a duty, a great

obligation is incumbent toward God, toward the nation, toward himself! We are sleeping, but time is passing on; we are sleeping. . . ."

"Permit me to observe to thee,"—said Lavrétzky,—"that we are not sleeping at all, now, but are, rather, preventing others from sleeping. We are cracking our throats like cocks. Hark, is n't that the third cock-crow?"

This sally disconcerted and calmed down Mikhalévitch. "Farewell until to-morrow,"—he said, with a smile,—and thrust his pipe into his tobacco-pouch. "Farewell until to-morrow," repeated Lavrétzky. But the friends conversed for an hour longer. However, their voices were no longer raised, and their speeches were quiet, sad, and kind.

Mikhalévitch departed on the following day, in spite of all Lavrétzky's efforts to detain him. Feódor Ivánitch did not succeed in persuading him to remain; but he talked with him to his heart's content. It came out, that Mikhalévitch had not a penny in the world. Already, on the preceding evening, Lavrétzky, with compassion, had observed in him all the signs and habits of confirmed poverty; his boots were broken, a button was missing from the back of his coat, his hands were guiltless of gloves, down was visible in his hair; on his arrival, it had not occurred to him to ask for washing materials, and at supper he ate like a shark tearing the meat apart with

his hands, and cracking the bones noisily with his strong, black teeth. It appeared, also, that the service had been of no benefit to him, that he had staked all his hopes on the revenue-farmer, who had engaged him simply with the object of having in his counting-house " an educated man." In spite of all this, Mikhalévitch was not dejected, and lived on as a cynic, an idealist, a poet, sincerely rejoicing and grieving over the lot of mankind, over his own calling,—and troubled himself very little as to how he was to keep himself from dying with hunger. Mikhalévitch had not married, but had been in love times without number, and wrote verses about all his lady-loves; with especial fervour did he sing the praises of one mysterious " panna "[1] with black and curling locks. . . . Rumours were in circulation, it is true, to the effect that the " panna " in question was a plain Jewess, well known to many cavalry officers . . . but, when you come to think of it,—does that make any difference?

Mikhalévitch did not get on well with Lemm: his vociferous speeches, his harsh manners, frightened the German, who was not used to such things. . . An unfortunate wretch always scents another unfortunate wretch from afar, but rarely makes up to him in old age,—and this is not in the least to be wondered at: he has nothing to share with him,—not even hopes.

[1] Polish for " gentlewoman."—TRANSLATOR.

Before his departure, Mikhalévitch had another long talk with Lavrétzky, prophesied perdition to him, if he did not come to a sense of his errors, entreated him to occupy himself seriously with the existence of his peasants, set himself up as an example, saying, that he had been purified in the furnace of affliction,—and immediately thereafter, several times mentioned himself as a happy man, compared himself to the birds of heaven, the lilies of the field. . . . . ."

" A black lily, at any rate,"—remarked Lavrétzky.

" Eh, brother, don't put on any of your aristocratic airs,"—retorted Mikhalévitch, good-naturedly:—" but thank God, rather, that in thy veins flows honest, plebeian blood. But I perceive, that thou art now in need of some pure, unearthly being, who shall wrest thee from this apathy of thine."

" Thanks, brother,"—said Lavrétzky:—" I have had enough of those unearthly beings."

" Shut up, *cuinuik!*"—exclaimed Mikhalévitch.

" Cynic,"—Lavrétzky corrected him.

" Just so, *cuinuik,*"—repeated Mikhalévitch, in no wise disconcerted.

Even as he took his seat in the tarantás, to which his flat, yellow, strangely light trunk was carried forth, he continued to talk; wrapped up in some sort of a Spanish cloak with a rusty col-

lar, and lion's paws in place of clasps, he still went on setting forth his views as to the fate of Russia, and waving his swarthy hand through the air, as though he were sowing the seeds of its future welfare. At last the horses started. . . . "Bear in mind my last three words,"—he shouted, thrusting his whole body out of the tarantás, and balancing himself:—"religion, progress, humanity! . . . . Farewell!" His head, with its cap pulled down to the very eyes, vanished. Lavrétzky remained standing alone on the porch and staring down the road until the tarantás disappeared from his sight. "But I think he probably is right,"—he said to himself, as he reentered the house:—"probably I am a trifler." Many of Mikhalévitch's words had sunk indelibly into his soul, although he had disputed and had not agreed with him. If only a man be kindly, no one can repulse him.

XXVI

Two days later, Márya Dmítrievna arrived with all her young people at Vasílievskoe, in accordance with her promise. The little girls immediately ran out into the garden, while Márya Dmítrievna languidly traversed the rooms, and languidly praised everything. Her visit to Lavrétzky she regarded as a token of great condescension, almost in the light of a good deed. She smiled affably when Antón and Apraxyéya, after the ancient custom of house-serfs, came to kiss her hand,—and in an enervated voice, through her nose, she asked them to give her some tea. To the great vexation of Antón, who had donned white knitted gloves, the newly-arrived lady was served with tea not by him, but by Lavrétzky's hired valet, who, according to the assertion of the old man, knew nothing whatever about proper forms. On the other hand, Antón reasserted his rights at dinner: firm as a post he stood behind Márya Dmítrievna's chair—and yielded his place to no one. The long-unprecedented arrival of visitors at Vasílievskoe both agitated and rejoiced the old man: it pleased him to see, that his master knew nice people. How-

ever, he was not the only one who was excited on that day: Lemm, also, was excited. He put on a short, snuff-coloured frock-coat, with a sharp-pointed collar, bound his neckerchief tightly, and incessantly coughed and stepped aside, with an agreeable and courteous mien. Lavrétzky noted, with satisfaction, that the close relations between himself and Liza still continued: no sooner did she enter, than she offered him her hand, in friendly wise. After dinner, Lemm drew forth, from the back pocket of his coat, into which he had been constantly thrusting his hand, a small roll of music, and pursing up his lips, he silently laid it on the piano. It was a romance, which he had composed on the preceding day to old-fashioned German words, in which the stars were alluded to. Liza immediately seated herself at the piano and began to decipher the romance. . . . Alas, the music turned out to be complicated, and disagreeably strained; it was obvious that the composer had attempted to express some passionate, profound sentiment, but nothing had come of it: so the attempt remained merely an attempt. . Lavrétzky and Liza both felt this,—and Lemm understood it: he said not a word, put his romance back in his pocket, and in reply to Liza's proposal to play it over again, he merely said significantly, with a shake of his head: "Enough—for the present!"—bent his shoulders, shrank together, and left the room.

Toward evening, they all went fishing together. The pond beyond the garden contained a quantity of carp and loach. They placed Márya Dmítrievna in an arm-chair near the bank, in the shade, spread a rug under her feet, and gave her the best hook; Antón, in the quality of an old and expert fisherman, offered his services. He assiduously spitted worms on the hook, slapped them down with his hand, spat on them, and even himself flung the line and hook, bending forward with his whole body. That same day, Márya Dmítrievna expressed herself to Feódor Iványitch, with regard to him, in the following phrase, in the French language of girls' institutes: "*Il n'y a plus maintenant de ces gens comme ça comme autrefois.*" Lemm, with the two little girls, went further away, to the dam; Lavrétzky placed himself beside Liza. The fish bit incessantly, the carp which were caught were constantly flashing their sides, now gold, now silver, in the air; the joyous exclamations of the little girls were unceasing; Márya Dmítrievna herself gave vent to a couple of shrill, feminine shrieks. Lavrétzky and Liza caught fewer than the others; this, probably, resulted from the fact that they paid less attention than the rest to their fishing, and allowed their floats to drift close inshore. The tall, reddish reeds rustled softly around them, in front of them the motionless water gleamed softly, and their conversation was

soft also. Liza stood on a small raft; Lavrétzky sat on the inclined trunk of a willow; Liza wore a white gown, girt about the waist with a broad ribbon, also white in hue; her straw hat was hanging from one hand, with the other, she supported, with some effort, the curved fishing-rod. Lavrétzky gazed at the pure, rather severe profile, at her hair tucked behind her ears, at her soft cheeks, which were as sunburned as those of a child,—and said to himself: "O how charmingly thou standest on my pond!" Liza did not turn toward him, but stared at the water,—and half smiled, half screwed up her eyes. The shadow of a linden-tree near at hand fell upon both of them.

"Do you know,"—began Lavrétzky:—"I have been thinking a great deal about my last conversation with you, and have come to the conclusion, that you are extraordinarily kind."

"I did not mean it in that way at all . . . ." Liza began,—and was overcome with shame.

"You are kind,"—repeated Lavrétzky. "I am a rough man, but I feel that every one must love you. There 's Lemm now, for example: he is simply in love with you."

Liza's brows quivered, rather than contracted; this always happened with her when she heard something disagreeable.

"I felt very sorry for him to-day,"—Lavrétzky resumed:—"with his unsuccessful romance.

To be young, and be able to do a thing—that can be borne; but to grow old, and not have the power—is painful. And the offensive thing about it is, that you are not conscious when your powers begin to wane. It is difficult for an old man to endure these shocks! . . . . Look out, the fish are biting at your hook. . . They say," —added Lavrétzky, after a brief pause,—" that Vladímir Nikoláitch has written a very pretty romance."

" Yes,"—replied Liza;—" it is a trifle, but it is not bad."

" And what is your opinion,"—asked Lavrétzky:—" is he a good musician? "

" It seems to me that he has great talent for music; but up to the present time he has not cultivated it as he should."

" Exactly. And is he a nice man? "

Liza laughed, and cast a quick glance at Feódor Iványitch.

" What a strange question! "—she exclaimed, drawing up her hook, and flinging it far out again.

" Why is it strange?—I am asking you about him as a man who has recently come hither, as your relative."

" As a relative? "

" Yes. I believe I am a sort of uncle to you."

" Vladímir Nikoláitch has a kind heart,"—said

Liza:—" he is clever; mamma is very fond of him."

" And do you like him? "

" He is a nice man: why should not I like him? "

" Ah! "—said Lavrétzky, and relapsed into silence. A half-mournful, half-sneering expression flitted across his face. His tenacious gaze discomfited Liza, but she continued to smile. " Well, God grant them happiness! "—he muttered, at last, as though to himself, and turned away his head.

Liza blushed.

" You are mistaken, Feódor Ivánitch,"—she said:—" there is no cause for your thinking . . . . But do not you like Vladímir Nikoláitch? "

" I do not."

" Why? "

" It seems to me, that he has no heart."

The smile vanished from Liza's face.

" You have become accustomed to judge people harshly,"—she said, after a long silence.

" I think not. What right have I to judge others harshly, when I myself stand in need of indulgence? Or have you forgotten that a lazy man is the only one who does not laugh at me? . . . . Well,"—he added:—" and have you kept your promise? "

" What promise? "

" Have you prayed for me? "

"Yes, I have prayed, and I do pray for you every day. But please do not speak lightly of that."

Lavrétzky began to assure Liza, that such a thing had never entered his head, that he entertained a profound respect for all convictions; then he entered upon a discussion of religion, its significance in the history of mankind, the significance of Christianity. . . .

"One must be a Christian,"—said Liza, not without a certain effort:—"not in order to understand heavenly things . . . . . yonder . . . earthly things, but because every man must die."

Lavrétzky, with involuntary surprise, raised his eyes to Liza's, and encountered her glance.

"What a word you have uttered!"—said he.

"The word is not mine,"—she replied.

"It is not yours. . . But why do you speak of death?"

"I do not know. I often think about it."

"Often?"

"Yes."

"One would not say so, to look at you now: you have such a merry, bright face, you are smiling. . . . ."

"Yes, I am very merry now,"—returned Liza, ingenuously.

Lavrétzky felt like seizing both her hands, and clasping them tightly.

"Liza, Liza!"—called Márya Dmítrievna,—"come hither, look! What a carp I have caught!"

"Immediately, *maman*,"—replied Liza, and went to her, but Lavrétzky remained on his willow-tree.

"I talk with her as though I were not a man whose life is finished," he said to himself. As she departed, Liza had hung her hat on a bough; with a strange, almost tender sentiment, Lavrétzky gazed at the hat, at its long, rather crumpled ribbons. Liza speedily returned to him, and again took up her stand on the raft.

"Why do you think that Vladímir Nikoláitch has no heart?"—she inquired, a few moments later.

"I have already told you, that I may be mistaken; however, time will show."

Liza became thoughtful. Lavrétzky began to talk about his manner of life at Vasílievskoe, about Mikhalévitch, about Antón; he felt impelled to talk to Liza, to communicate to her everything that occurred to his soul: she was so charming, she listened to him so attentively; her infrequent comments and replies seemed to him so simple and wise. He even told her so.

Liza was amazed.

"Really?"—she said;—"why, I have always

thought that I, like my maid Nástya, had no words of my own. One day she said to her betrothed: 'Thou must find it tiresome with me; thou always sayest such fine things to me, but I have no words of my own.'"

"And thank God for that!" thought Lavrétzky.

XXVII

In the meantime, evening drew on, and Márya Dmítrievna expressed a desire to return home. The little girls were, with difficulty, torn away from the pond, and made ready. Lavrétzky announced his intention to escort his guests half way, and ordered his horse to be saddled. As he seated Márya Dmítrievna in the carriage, he remembered Lemm; but the old man was nowhere to be found. He had disappeared as soon as the angling was over. Antón slammed to the carriage door, with a strength remarkable for his years, and grimly shouted: "Drive on, coachman!" The carriage rolled off. On the back seat sat Márya Dmítrievna and Liza; on the front seat, the little girls and the maid. The evening was warm and still, and the windows were lowered on both sides. Lavrétzky rode at a trot by Liza's side of the carriage, with his hand resting on the door,—he had dropped the reins on the neck of his steed, which was trotting smoothly,—and from time to time exchanged a few words with the young girl. The sunset glow vanished; night descended, and the air grew even warmer. Márya Dmítrievna soon fell into a doze; the little girls and the maid also dropped off to sleep. The

carriage rolled swiftly and smoothly onward; Liza leaned forward; the moon, which had just risen, shone on her face, the fragrant night breeze blew on her cheeks and neck. She felt at ease. Her hand lay on the door of the carriage, alongside of Lavrétzky's hand. And he, also, felt at ease: he was being borne along through the tranquil nocturnal warmth, never taking his eyes from the kind young face, listening to the youthful voice, which was ringing even in a whisper, saying simple, kindly things; he did not even notice that he had passed the half-way point. He did not wish to awaken Márya Dmítrievna, pressed Liza's hand lightly, and said:—"We are friends, now, are we not?" She nodded, he drew up his horse. The carriage rolled on, gently swaying and lurching: Lavrétzky proceeded homeward at a footpace. The witchery of the summer night took possession of him; everything around him seemed so unexpectedly strange, and, at the same time, so long, so sweetly familiar; far and near,—and things were visible at a long distance, although the eye did not comprehend much of what it beheld,—everything was at rest; young, blossoming life made itself felt in that very repose. Lavrétzky's horse walked briskly, swaying regularly to right and left; its huge black shadow kept pace alongside; there was something mysteriously pleasant in the tramp of its hoofs, something cheerful and wondrous in the

resounding call of the quail. The stars were hidden in a sort of brilliant smoke; the moon, not yet at the full, shone with a steady gleam; its light flooded the blue sky in streams, and fell like a stain of smoky gold upon the thin cloudlets which floated past; the crispness of the air called forth a slight moisture in the eyes, caressingly enveloped all the limbs, poured in an abundant flood into the breast. Lavrétzky enjoyed himself, and rejoiced at his enjoyment. "Come, life is still before us," he thought:—"it has not been completely ruined yet by . . . . ." He did not finish his sentence, and say who or what had ruined it. . . Then he began to think of Liza, that it was hardly likely that she loved Pánshin; that had he met her under different circumstances,—God knows what might have come of it; that he understood Lemm, although she had no "words of her own." Yes, but that was not true: she had words of her own. . . . "Do not speak lightly of that," recurred to Lavrétzky's memory. He rode for a long time, with drooping head, then he straightened himself up, and slowly recited:

"And I have burned all that I worshipped,
I have worshipped all that I burned . . . ."

but immediately gave his horse a cut with the whip, and rode at a gallop all the rest of the way home.

As he alighted from his horse, he cast a last glance around him, with an involuntary, grateful smile. Night, the speechless, caressing night, lay upon the hills and in the valleys; from afar, from its fragrant depths, God knows whence,—whether from heaven or earth,—emanated a soft, quiet warmth. Lavrétzky wafted a last salutation to Liza, and ran up the steps.

The following day passed rather languidly. Rain fell from early morning; Lemm cast furtive glances from beneath his eyebrows, and pursed up his lips more and more tightly, as though he had vowed to himself never to open them again. On lying down to sleep, Lavrétzky had taken to bed with him a whole pile of French newspapers, which had already been lying on his table for two weeks, with their wrappers unbroken. He set to work idly to strip off the wrappers, and glance through the columns of the papers, which, however, contained nothing new. He was on the point of throwing them aside,—when, all of a sudden, he sprang out of bed as though he had been stung. In the feuilleton of one of the papers, M'sieu Jules, already known to us, imparted to his readers " a sad bit of news ": " The charming, bewitching native of Moscow," he wrote, " one of the queens of fashion, the ornament of Parisian salons, Madame de Lavretzki, had died almost instantaneously,—and this news, unhappily only too true, had only just reached him,

M. Jules. He was,"—he continued,—" he might say, a friend of the deceased. . . . ."

Lavrétzky dressed himself, went out into the garden, and until morning dawned, he paced back and forth in one and the same alley.

XXVIII

On the following morning, at tea, Lemm requested Lavrétzky to furnish him with horses, that he might return to town. "It is time that I should set about my work,—that is to say, my lessons," remarked the old man:—"but here I am only wasting time in vain." Lavrétzky did not immediately reply to him: he seemed preoccupied. "Very well,"—he said at last;—"I will accompany you myself."—Without any aid from the servants, grunting and fuming, Lemm packed his small trunk, and tore up and burned several sheets of music-paper. The horses were brought round. As he emerged from his study, Lavrétzky thrust into his pocket the newspaper of the day before. During the entire journey, Lemm and Lavrétzky had very little to say to each other: each of them was engrossed with his own thoughts, and each was delighted that the other did not disturb him. And they parted rather coldly,—which, by the way, frequently happens between friends in Russia. Lavrétzky drove the old man to his tiny house: the latter alighted, got out his trunk, and without offering his hand to his friend (he held his trunk in front of his chest

with both hands), without even looking at him,—he said in Russian: "Good-bye, sir!"—"Good-bye,"—repeated Lavrétzky, and ordered his coachman to drive him to his own lodgings. (He had hired a lodging in the town of O * * * in case he might require it.) After writing several letters and dining in haste, Lavrétzky took his way to the Kalítins. In their drawing-room he found no one but Pánshin, who informed him that Márya Dmítrievna would be down directly, and immediately entered into conversation with him, with the most cordial amiability. Up to that day, Pánshin had treated Lavrétzky, not exactly in a patronizing way, yet condescendingly; but Liza, in telling Pánshin about her jaunt of the day before, had expressed herself to the effect that Lavrétzky was a very fine and clever man; that was enough: the "very fine" man must be captivated. Pánshin began with compliments to Lavrétzky, with descriptions of the raptures with which, according to his statement, Márya Dmítrievna's whole family had expressed themselves about Vasílievskoe, and then, according to his wont, passing adroitly to himself, he began to talk about his own occupations, his views of life, of the world, of the government service;—he said a couple of words about the future of Russia, about the proper way of keeping the governors in hand; thereupon, merrily jeered at himself, and added, that, among other things, he had been

commissioned in Petersburg—*"de populariser l'idée du cadastre."* He talked for quite a long time, with careless self-confidence solving all difficulties, and juggling with the most weighty administrative and political questions, as a sleight-of-hand performer juggles with his balls. The expressions: " This is what I would do, if I were the government "; " You, as a clever man, will immediately agree with me "—were never absent from his tongue. Lavrétzky listened coldly to Pánshin's idle chatter: he did not like this handsome, clever, and unconstrainedly elegant man, with his brilliant smile, courteous voice, and searching eyes. Pánshin speedily divined, with the swift comprehension of other people's sentiments which was peculiar to him, that he was not affording his interlocutor any particular pleasure, and made his escape, under a plausible pretext, deciding in his own mind that Lavrétzky might be a very fine man, but that he was not sympathetic, was *"aigri,"* and, *" en somme,"* rather ridiculous. —Márya Dmítrievna made her appearance accompanied by Gedeónovsky; then Márfa Timoféevna entered with Liza; after them followed the other members of the household; then came that lover of music, Mme. Byelenítzyn, a small, thin lady, with an almost childish, fatigued and handsome little face, in a rustling black gown, with a motley-hued fan, and heavy gold bracelets; her husband also came, a rosy-cheeked, plump man,

with huge feet and hands, with white eyelashes, and an impassive smile on his thick lips; in company his wife never spoke to him, but at home, in moments of tenderness, she was wont to call him "her little pig"; Pánshin returned: the rooms became very full of people and very noisy. Such a throng of people was not to Lavrétzky's liking; Mme. Byelenítzyn particularly enraged him by constantly staring at him through her lorgnette. He would have withdrawn at once, had it not been for Liza: he wished to say two words to her in private, but for a long time he was not able to seize a convenient moment, and contented himself with watching her in secret joy; never had her face seemed to him more noble and charming. She appeared to great advantage from the proximity of Mme. Byelenítzyn. The latter was incessantly fidgeting about on her chair, shrugging her narrow little shoulders, laughing, in an enervated way, and screwing up her eyes, then suddenly opening them very wide. Liza sat quietly, her gaze was direct, and she did not laugh at all. The hostess sat down to play cards with Márfa Timoféevna, Mme. Byelenítzyn, and Gedeónovsky, who played very slowly, was constantly making mistakes, blinking his eyes, and mopping his face with his handkerchief. Pánshin assumed a melancholy mien, expressed himself with brevity, with great significance and mournfulness,—for all the world

like an artist who has not had his say,—but despite the entreaties of Mme. Byelenítzyn, who was having a violent flirtation with him, he would not consent to sing his romance: Lavrétzky embarrassed him. Feódor Ivánitch also said little; the peculiar expression of his face had startled Liza, as soon as he entered the room: she immediately felt that he had something to communicate to her, but, without herself knowing why, she was afraid to interrogate him. At last, as she passed into the hall [1] to pour tea, she involuntarily turned her head in his direction. He immediately followed her.

"What is the matter with you?"—she said, as she placed the teapot on the samovár.

"Have you noticed it?"

"You are not the same to-day as I have seen you heretofore."

Lavrétzky bent over the table.

"I wanted,"—he began,—"to tell you a certain piece of news, but now it is not possible.—However, read what is marked with pencil in this feuilleton,"—he added, giving her the copy of the newspaper which he had brought with him. —"I beg that you will keep this secret; I will call on you to-morrow morning."

Liza was surprised. . . Pánshin made his appearance on the threshold of the door: she put the newspaper in her pocket.

[1] A combination of music-room, ball-room, play-room, also used for all sorts of purposes, in all well-to-do Russian houses.—TRANSLATOR.

"Have you read Obermann, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna?"—Pánshin asked her meditatively.

Liza gave him a superficial answer, left the hall, and went up-stairs. Lavrétzky returned to the drawing-room, and approached the card-table. Márfa Timoféevna, with her cap-ribbons untied, and red in the face, began to complain to him about her partner, Gedeónovsky, who, according to her, did not know how to lead.

"Evidently,"—she said,—"playing cards is quite a different thing from inventing fibs."

Her partner continued to blink and mop his face. Liza entered the drawing-room, and seated herself in a corner; Lavrétzky looked at her, she looked at him,—and something like dread fell upon them both. He read surprise and a sort of secret reproach in her face. Long as he might to talk to her, he could not do it; to remain in the same room with her, a guest among strangers, was painful to him: he decided to go away. As he took leave of her, he managed to repeat that he would come on the morrow, and he added that he trusted in her friendship.

"Come,"—she replied, with the same amazement on her face.

Pánshin brightened up after Lavrétzky's departure; he began to give advice to Gedeónovsky, banteringly paid court to Mme. Byelenítzyn, and, at last, sang his romance. But he talked with Liza and gazed at her as before: significantly and rather sadly.

And again, Lavrétzky did not sleep all night long. He did not feel sad, he was not excited, he had grown altogether calm; but he could not sleep. He did not even recall the past; he simply gazed at his life: his heart beat strongly and evenly, the hours flew past, but he did not even think of sleeping. At times, only, did the thought come to the surface in his mind: "But that is not true, it is all nonsense,"—and he paused, lowered his head, and began again to gaze at his life.

XXIX

Márya Dmítrievna did not receive Lavrétzky with any excess of cordiality, when he presented himself on the following day. "Well, you are making yourself pretty free of the house,"—she said to herself. Personally, he did not greatly please her, and, in addition, Pánshin, under whose influence she was, had sung his praises in a very sly and careless manner on the preceding evening. As she did not look upon him in the light of a guest, and did not consider it necessary to trouble herself about a relative almost a member of the family, half an hour had not elapsed before he was strolling down an alley in the garden with Liza. Lyénotchka and Schúrotchka were frolicking a short distance away, among the flower-beds.

Liza was composed, as usual, but paler than usual. She took from her pocket and handed to Lavrétzky the sheet of newspaper, folded small.

"This is dreadful!"—said she.

Lavrétzky made no reply.

"But perhaps it is not yet true,"—added Liza.

"That is why I asked you not to mention it to any one."

Liza walked on a little way.

"Tell me,"—she began:—"you are not grieved? Not in the least?"

"I do not know myself what my feelings are,"—replied Lavrétzky.

"But, assuredly, you used to love her?"

"Yes, I did."

"Very much?"

"Very much."

"And you are not grieved by her death?"

"It is not now that she has died to me."

"What you say is sinful. . . . Do not be angry with me. You call me your friend: a friend may say anything. To tell the truth, I feel terrified. . . . Your face was so malign yesterday. . . . Do you remember, how you were complaining of her, not long ago?—and perhaps, already, at that very time, she was no longer alive. This is terrible. It is exactly as though it had been sent to you as a chastisement."

Lavrétzky laughed bitterly.

"Do you think so? . . . At all events, I am free now."

Liza gave a slight start.

"Stop, do not talk like that. Of what use to you is your freedom? You must not think about that now, but about forgiveness. . ."

"I forgave her long ago,"—interrupted Lavrétzky, with a wave of the hand.

"No, not that,"—returned Liza, and blushed. "You did not understand me rightly. You must take means to obtain forgiveness. . . ."

"Who is there to forgive me?"

"Who?—God. Who else but God can forgive us?"

Lavrétzky caught her hand.

"Akh, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna, believe me,"—he exclaimed:—"I have been sufficiently punished as it is. I have already atoned for everything, believe me."

"You cannot know that,"—said Liza in a low voice. "You have forgotten;—not very long ago,—when you were talking to me,—you were not willing to forgive her. . . ."

The two walked silently down the alley.

"And how about your daughter?"—Liza suddenly inquired, and halted.

Lavrétzky started.

"Oh, do not worry yourself! I have already despatched letters to all the proper places. The future of my daughter, as you call . . . . as you say . . . is assured. Do not disquiet yourself."

Liza smiled sadly.

"But you are right,"—went on Lavrétzky:—"what can I do with my freedom? Of what use is it to me?"

"When did you receive that newspaper?"—said Liza, making no reply to his question.

"The day after your visit."

"And is it possible . . . . is it possible that you did not even weep?"

"No. I was stunned; but where were the tears to come from? Weep over the past,—but, you see, it is entirely extirpated in my case! . . . . Her behaviour itself did not destroy my happiness, but merely proved to me that it had never existed. What was there to cry about? But, who knows?—perhaps I should have been more grieved if I had received this news two weeks earlier. . . . . ."

"Two weeks?"—returned Liza. "But what has happened in those two weeks?"

Lavrétzky made no answer, and Liza suddenly blushed more furiously than before.

"Yes, yes, you have guessed it,"—interposed Lavrétzky:—"in the course of those two weeks I have learned what a pure woman's soul is like, and my past has retreated still further from me."

Liza became confused, and softly walked toward the flower-garden, to Lyénotchka and Schúrotchka.

"And I am glad that I have shown you this newspaper,"—said Lavrétzky, as he followed her:—"I have already contracted the habit of concealing nothing from you, and I hope that you will repay me with the same confidence."

"Do you think so?"—said Liza, and stopped short. "In that case, I ought to . . . . . but no! That is impossible."

"What is it? Speak, speak!"

"Really, it seems to me that I ought not. . . . However," added Liza, and turned to Lavrétzky with a smile:—"what is half-frankness worth?—Do you know? I received a letter to-day."

"From Pánshin?"

"Yes, from him. . . . . How did you know?"

"He asks your hand?"

"Yes,"—uttered Liza, and looked seriously in Lavrétzky's eyes.

Lavrétzky, in his turn, gazed seriously at Liza.

"Well, and what reply have you made to him?"—he said at last.

"I do not know what reply to make,"—replied Liza, and dropped her clasped hands.

"What? Surely, you like him?"

"Yes, he pleases me; he seems to be a nice man. . . ."

"You said the same thing to me, in those very same words, three days ago. What I want to know is, whether you love him with that strong, passionate feeling which we are accustomed to call love?"

"As *you* understand it,—no."

"You are not in love with him?"

"No. But is that necessary?"

"Of course it is!"

"Mamma likes him,"—pursued Liza:—"he is amiable; I have nothing against him."

"Still, you are wavering?"

"Yes . . . and perhaps,—your words may be the cause of it. Do you remember what you said day before yesterday? But that weakness . . . ."

"Oh, my child!"—suddenly exclaimed Lavrétzky—and his voice trembled:—"do not argue artfully, do not designate as weakness the cry of your heart, which does not wish to surrender itself without love. Do not take upon yourself that terrible responsibility toward a man whom you do not love and to whom you do not wish to belong. . . ."

"I am listening,—I am taking nothing upon myself. . ." Liza was beginning.

"Listen to your heart; it alone will tell you the truth,"—Lavrétzky interrupted her. . . "Experience, reasoning—all that is stuff and nonsense! Do not deprive yourself of the best, the only happiness on earth."

"Is it you, Feódor Iványitch, who are speaking thus? You, yourself, married for love—and were you happy?"

Lavrétzky wrung his hands.

"Akh, do not talk to me of that! You cannot even understand all that a young, untried, absurdly educated lad can mistake for love! . . . Yes, and in short, why calumniate one's self? I just told you, that I had not known happiness . . . . no! I was happy!"

"It seems to me, Feódor Iványitch,"—said Liza, lowering her voice (when she did not agree

with her interlocutor, she always lowered her voice; and, at the same time, she became greatly agitated):—"happiness on earth does not depend upon us. . . ."

"It does, it does depend upon us, believe me" (he seized both her hands; Liza turned pale, and gazed at him almost in terror, but with attention):—"if only we have not ruined our own lives. For some people, a love-marriage may prove unhappy; but not for you, with your calm temperament, with your clear soul! I entreat you, do not marry without love, from a sense of duty, of renunciation, or anything else. . . . . That, also, is want of faith, that is calculation,—and even worse. Believe me,—I have a right to speak thus: I have paid dearly for that right. And if your God . . . ."

At that moment, Lavrétzky noticed that Lyénotchka and Schúrotchka were standing beside Liza, and staring at him with dumb amazement. He released Liza's hands, said hastily: "Pray pardon me,"—and walked toward the house.

"I have only one request to make of you,"—he said, returning to Liza:—"do not decide instantly, wait, think over what I have said to you. Even if you have not believed me, if you have made up your mind to a marriage of reason,—even in that case, you ought not to marry Mr. Pánshin: he cannot be your husband. . . . Promise me, will you not, not to be in a hurry?"

Liza tried to answer Lavrétzky, but did not utter a word,—not because she had made up her mind "to be in a hurry"; but because her heart was beating too violently, and a sensation resembling fear had stopped her breath.

XXX

As he was leaving the Kalítins' house, Lavrétzky encountered Pánshin; they saluted each other coldly. Lavrétzky went home to his apartment, and locked himself in. He experienced a sensation such as he had, in all probability, never experienced before. Had he remained long in that state of " peaceful numbness "? had he long continued to feel, as he had expressed it, " at the bottom of the river "? What had altered his position? what had brought him out, to the surface? the most ordinary, inevitable though always unexpected of events;—death? Yes: but he did not think so much about the death of his wife, about his freedom, as,—what sort of answer would Liza give to Pánshin? He was conscious that, in the course of the last three days, he had come to look upon her with different eyes; he recalled how, on returning home, and thinking about her in the silence of the night, he had said to himself: " If . . . ." That " if," wherein he had alluded to the past, to the impossible, had come to pass, although not in the way he had anticipated,—but this was little in itself. " She will obey her mother," he thought, " she will marry

Pánshin; but even if she refuses him,—is it not all the same to me?" As he passed in front of the mirror, he cast a cursory glance at his face, and shrugged his shoulders.

The day sped swiftly by in these reflections; evening arrived. Lavrétzky wended his way to the Kalítins. He walked briskly, but approached their house with lingering steps. In front of the steps stood Pánshin's drozhky. "Come,"—thought Lavrétzky,—"I will not be an egoist," and entered the house. Inside he met no one, and all was still in the drawing-room; he opened the door, and beheld Márya Dmítrievna, playing picquet with Pánshin. Pánshin bowed to him in silence, and the mistress of the house uttered a little scream:—"How unexpected!"—and frowned slightly. Lavrétzky took a seat by her side, and began to look over her cards.

"Do you know how to play picquet?"—she asked him, with a certain dissembled vexation, and immediately announced that she discarded.

Pánshin reckoned up ninety, and politely and calmly began to gather up the tricks, with a severe and dignified expression on his countenance. That is the way in which diplomats should play; probably, that is the way in which he was wont to play in Petersburg, with some powerful dignitary, whom he desired to impress with a favourable opinion as to his solidity and

maturity. "One hundred and one, one hundred and two, hearts; one hundred and three,"—rang out his measured tone, and Lavrétzky could not understand what note resounded in it: reproach or self-conceit.

"Is Márfa Timoféevna to be seen?"—he asked, observing that Pánshin, still with great dignity, was beginning to shuffle the cards. Not a trace of the artist was, as yet, to be observed in him.

"Yes, I think so. She is in her own apartments, up-stairs,"—replied Márya Dmítrievna:—"you had better inquire."

Lavrétzky went up-stairs, and found Márfa Timoféevna at cards also: she was playing *duratchkí* (fools) with Nastásya Kárpovna. Róska barked at him; but both the old ladies welcomed him cordially, and Márfa Timoféevna, in particular, seemed to be in high spirits.

"Ah! Fédya! Pray come in,"—she said:—"sit down, my dear little father. We shall be through our game directly. Wouldst thou like some preserves? Schúrotchka, get him a jar of strawberries. Thou dost not want it? Well, then sit as thou art; but as for smoking—thou must not: I cannot bear thy tobacco, and, moreover, it makes Matrós sneeze."

Lavrétzky made haste to assert that he did not care to smoke.

"Hast thou been down-stairs?"—went on the

old woman:—" whom didst thou see there? Is Pánshin still on hand, as usual? And didst thou see Liza? No? She intended to come hither. . . . Yes, there she is; speak of an angel. . ."

Liza entered the room and, on perceiving Lavrétzky, she blushed.

" I have run in to see you for a minute, Márfa Timoféevna," she began. . . .

" Why for a minute?"—returned the old woman. " What makes all you young girls such restless creatures? Thou seest, that I have a visitor: chatter to him, entertain him."

Liza seated herself on the edge of a chair, raised her eyes to Lavrétzky,—and felt that it was impossible not to give him to understand how her interview with Pánshin had ended. But how was that to be done? She felt both ashamed and awkward. She had not been acquainted with him long, with that man who both went rarely to church and bore with so much indifference the death of his wife,—and here she was already imparting her secrets to him. . . . He took an interest in her, it is true; she, herself, trusted him, and felt attracted to him; but, nevertheless, she felt ashamed, as though a stranger had entered her pure, virgin chamber.

Márfa Timoféevna came to her assistance.

" If thou wilt not entertain him,"—she began, " who will entertain him, poor fellow? I am too old for him, he is too clever for me, and for

Nastásya Kárpovna he is too old, you must give her nothing but very young men."

"How can I entertain Feódor Iványitch?"—said Liza.—"If he likes, I will play something for him on the piano,"—she added, irresolutely.

"Very good indeed: that 's my clever girl,"—replied Márfa Timoféevna,—"Go down-stairs, my dear people; when you are through, come back; for I have been left the 'fool,' and I feel insulted, and want to win back."

Liza rose: Lavrétzky followed her. As they were descending the staircase, Liza halted.

"They tell the truth,"—she began:—"when they say that the hearts of men are full of contradictions. Your example ought to frighten me, to render me distrustful of marriage for love, but I . . . . ."

"You have refused him?"—interrupted Lavrétzky.

"No; but I have not accepted him. I told him everything, everything that I felt, and asked him to wait. Are you satisfied?"—she added, with a swift smile,—and lightly touching the railing with her hand, she ran down the stairs.

"What shall I play for you?"—she asked, as she raised the lid of the piano.

"Whatever you like,"—replied Lavrétzky, and seated himself in such a position that he could watch her.

Liza began to play, and, for a long time, never

took her eyes from her fingers. At last, she glanced at Lavrétzky, and stopped short: so wonderful and strange did his face appear to her.

"What is the matter with you?"—she asked.

"Nothing,"—he replied:—"all is very well with me; I am glad for you, I am glad to look at you,—go on."

"It seems to me,"—said Liza, a few moments later:—"that if he really loved me, he would not have written that letter; he ought to have felt that I could not answer him now."

"That is of no importance,"—said Lavrétzky:—"the important point is, that you do not love him."

"Stop,—what sort of a conversation is this! I keep having visions of your dead wife, and you are terrible to me!"

"My Lizéta plays charmingly, does she not, Valdemar?"—Márya Dmítrievna was saying to Pánshin at the same moment.

"Yes,"—replied Pánshin;—"very charmingly."

Márya Dmítrievna gazed tenderly at her young partner; but the latter assumed a still more important and careworn aspect, and announced fourteen kings.

XXXI

Lavrétzky was not a young man; he could not long deceive himself as to the sentiments with which Liza had inspired him; he became definitively convinced, on that day, that he had fallen in love with her. This conviction brought no great joy to him. "Is it possible," he thought, "that at the age of five and thirty I have nothing better to do than to put my soul again into the hands of a woman? But Liza is not like *that one;* she would not require from me shameful sacrifices; she would not draw me away from my occupations; she herself would encourage me to honourable, severe toil, and we would advance together toward a fine goal. Yes," he wound up his meditations:—"all that is good, but the bad thing is, that she will not in the least wish to marry me. It was not for nothing that she told me, that I am terrible to her. On the other hand, she does not love that Pánshin either. . . . A poor consolation!"

Lavrétzky rode out to Vasílievskoe; but he did not remain four days,—it seemed so irksome to him there. He was tortured, also, by expectancy: the information imparted by M—r. Jules re-

quired confirmation, and he had received no letters. He returned to the town, and sat out the evening at the Kalítins'. It was easy for him to see, that Márya Dmítrievna had risen in revolt against him; but he succeeded in appeasing her somewhat by losing fifteen rubles to her at picquet,—and he spent about half an hour alone with Liza, in spite of the fact that her mother, no longer ago than the day before, had advised her not to be too familiar with a man *"qui a un si grand ridicule."* He found a change in her: she seemed, somehow, to have become more thoughtful, she upbraided him for his absence, and asked him—would he not go to church on the following morning (the next day was Sunday)?

"Go,"—she said to him, before he had succeeded in replying:—"we will pray together for the repose of *her* soul."—Then she added, that she did not know what she ought to do,—she did not know whether she had the right to make Pánshin wait any longer for her decision.

"Why?"—asked Lavrétzky.

"Because,"—said she: "I am already beginning to suspect what that decision will be."

She declared that her head ached, and went off to her own room up-stairs, irresolutely offering Lavrétzky the tips of her fingers.

The next day, Lavrétzky went to the morning service. Liza was already in the church when he arrived. She observed him, although she did

not turn toward him. She prayed devoutly; her eyes sparkled softly, her head bent and rose softly. He felt that she was praying for him also,—and a wonderful emotion filled his soul. He felt happy, and somewhat conscience-stricken. The decorously-standing congregation, the familiar faces, the melodious chanting, the odour of the incense, the long, slanting rays of light from the windows, the very gloom of the walls and vaulted roof,—all spoke to his ear. He had not been in a church for a long time, he had not appealed to God for a long time: and even now, he did not utter any words of prayer,—he did not even pray without words, but for a moment, at least, if not in body, certainly with all his mind, he prostrated himself and bowed humbly to the very earth. He recalled how, in his childhood, he had prayed in church on every occasion until he became conscious of some one's cool touch on his brow; "this," he had been accustomed to say to himself at that time, "is my guardian-angel accepting me, laying upon me the seal of the chosen." He cast a glance at Liza. . . . "Thou hast brought me hither," he thought:—"do thou also touch me, touch my soul." She continued to pray in the same calm manner as before; her face seemed to him joyful, and he was profoundly moved once more; he entreated for that other soul —peace, for his own—pardon. . . . . .

They met in the porch; she greeted him with

cheerful and amiable dignity. The sun brilliantly illuminated the young grass in the churchyard, and the motley-hued gowns and kerchiefs of the women; the bells of the neighbouring churches were booming aloft; the sparrows were chirping in the hedgerows. Lavrétzky stood with head uncovered, and smiled; a light breeze lifted his hair, and the tips of the ribbons on Liza's hat. He put Liza into her carriage, distributed all his small change to the poor, and softly wended his way homeward.

XXXII

Difficult days arrived for Feódor Iványitch. He found himself in a constant fever. Every morning he went to the post-office, with excitement broke the seals of his letters and newspapers, —and nowhere did he find anything which might have confirmed or refuted the fateful rumour. Sometimes he became repulsive even to himself: "Why am I thus waiting,"—he said to himself, "like a crow for blood, for the sure news of my wife's death?" He went to the Kalítins' every day; but even there he was no more at his ease: the mistress of the house openly sulked at him, received him with condescension; Pánshin treated him with exaggerated courtesy; Lemm had become misanthropic, and hardly even bowed to him,—and, chief of all, Liza seemed to avoid him. But when she chanced to be left alone with him, in place of her previous trustfulness, confusion manifested itself in her: she did not know what to say to him, and he himself felt agitation. In the course of a few days, Liza had become quite different from herself as he had previously known her: in her movements, her voice, in her very laugh, a secret trepidation was perceptible,

an unevenness which had not heretofore existed. Márya Dmítrievna, like the genuine egoist she was, suspected nothing; but Márfa Timoféevna began to watch her favourite. Lavrétzky more than once reproached himself with having shown to Liza the copy of the newspaper which he had received: he could not fail to recognise the fact, that in his spiritual condition there was an element which was perturbing to pure feeling. He also assumed that the change in Liza had been brought about by her conflict with herself, by her doubts: what answer should she give to Pánshin? One day she brought him a book, one of Walter Scott's novels, which she herself had asked of him.

"Have you read this book?"—he asked.

"No; I do not feel in a mood for books now,"—she replied, and turned to go.

"Wait a minute: I have not been alone with you for a long time. You seem to be afraid of me."

"Yes."

"Why so, pray?"

"I do not know."

Lavrétzky said nothing for a while.

"Tell me,"—he began:—"you have not yet made up your mind?"

"What do you mean by that?"—she said, without raising her eyes.

"You understand me. . . ."

Liza suddenly flushed up.

"Ask me no questions about anything,"—she ejaculated, with vivacity:—"I know nothing, I do not even know myself. . . . ." And she immediately beat a retreat.

On the following day, Lavrétzky arrived at the Kalítins' after dinner, and found all preparations made to have the All-Night Vigil service held there.[1] In one corner of the dining-room, on a square table, covered with a clean cloth, small holy pictures in gold settings, with tiny, dull brilliants in their halos, were already placed, leaning against the wall. An old man-servant, in a grey frock-coat and slippers, walked the whole length of the room in a deliberate manner, and without making any noise with his heels, and placed two wax tapers in slender candlesticks in front of the holy images, crossed himself, made a reverence, and softly withdrew. The unlighted drawing-room was deserted. Lavrétzky walked down the dining-room, and inquired—was it not some one's Name-day? He was answered, in a whisper, that it was not, but that the Vigil service had been ordered at the desire of Lizavéta Mikhaílovna and Márfa Timoféevna; that the intention had been to bring thither the wonder-working *ikóna,* but it had gone to a sick person,

[1] This service, consisting (generally) of Vespers and Matins, can be read in private houses, and even by laymen: whereas, the Liturgy, or Mass, must be celebrated at a duly consecrated altar, by a duly ordained priest.—Translator.

thirty versts distant. There soon arrived, also, in company with the chanters, the priest, a man no longer young, with a small bald spot, who coughed loudly in the anteroom; the ladies all immediately trooped in single file from the boudoir, and approached to receive his blessing; Lavrétzky saluted him in silence; and he returned the salute in silence. The priest stood still for a short time, then cleared his throat again, and asked in a low tone, with a bass voice:

"Do you command me to proceed?"

"Proceed, bátiushka,"—replied Márya Dmítrievna.

He began to vest himself; the chanter obsequiously asked for a live coal; the incense began to diffuse its fragrance. The maids and lackeys emerged from the anteroom and halted in a dense throng close to the door. Róska, who never came down-stairs, suddenly made his appearance in the dining-room: they began to drive him out, and he became confused, turned around and sat down; a footman picked him up and carried him away. The Vigil service began. Lavrétzky pressed himself into a corner; his sensations were strange, almost melancholy; he himself was not able clearly to make out what he felt. Márya Dmítrievna stood in front of them all, before an arm-chair; she crossed herself with enervated carelessness, in regular lordly fashion,—now glancing around her, again suddenly casting her eyes upward: she was bored.

Márfa Timoféevna seemed troubled; Nastásya Kárpovna kept prostrating herself, and rising with a sort of modest, soft rustle; Liza took up her stand, and never stirred from her place, never moved; from the concentrated expression of her countenance, it was possible to divine that she was praying assiduously and fervently. When she kissed the cross, at the end of the service, she also kissed the priest's large, red hand. Márya Dmítrievna invited him to drink tea; he took off his stole, assumed a rather secular air, and passed into the drawing-room with the ladies. A not over animated conversation began. The priest drank four cups of tea, incessantly mopping his bald spot with his handkerchief, and narrated, among other things, that merchant Avóshnikoff had contributed seven hundred rubles to gild the "cupola" of the church, and he also imparted a sure cure for freckles. Lavrétzky tried to seat himself beside Liza, but she maintained a severe, almost harsh demeanour, and never once glanced at him; she appeared to be deliberately refraining from noticing him; a certain cold, dignified rapture had descended upon her. For some reason or other, Lavrétzky felt inclined to smile uninterruptedly, and say something amusing; but there was confusion in his heart, and he went away at last, secretly perplexed. . . . He felt that there was something in Liza into which he could not penetrate.

On another occasion, Lavrétzky, as he sat in

the drawing-room, and listened to the insinuating but heavy chatter of Gedeónovsky, suddenly turned round, without himself knowing why he did so, and caught a deep, attentive, questioning gaze in Liza's eyes. . . . . It was riveted on him, that puzzling gaze, afterward. Lavrétzky thought about it all night long. He had not fallen in love in boyish fashion, it did not suit him to sigh and languish, neither did Liza arouse that sort of sentiment; but love has its sufferings at every age,—and he underwent them to the full.

XXXIII

One day, according to his custom, Lavrétzky was sitting at the Kalítins'. A fatiguingly-hot day had been followed by so fine an evening, that Márya Dmítrievna, despite her aversion to the fresh air, had ordered all the windows and doors into the garden to be opened, and had announced that she would not play cards, that it was a sin to play cards in such weather, and one must enjoy nature. Pánshin was the only visitor. Tuned up by the evening, and unwilling to sing before Lavrétzky, yet conscious of an influx of artistic emotions, he turned to poetry: he recited well, but with too much self-consciousness, and with unnecessary subtleties, several of Lérmontoff's poems (at that time, Púshkin had not yet become fashionable again)—and, all at once, as though ashamed of his expansiveness, he began, apropos of the familiar "Thought," to upbraid and reprove the present generation; in that connection, not missing the opportunity to set forth, how he would turn everything around in his own way, if the power were in his hands. "Russia," said he,—"has lagged behind Europe; she must catch up with it. People assert, that we are young

—that is nonsense; and moreover, that we possess no inventive genius: X . . . himself admits that we have not even invented a mouse-trap. Consequently, we are compelled, willy-nilly, to borrow from others. 'We are ill,'—says Lérmontoff,—I agree with him; but we are ill because we have only half converted ourselves into Europeans; that is where we have made our mistake, and that is what we must be cured of." (*"Le cadastre,"*—thought Lavrétzky).—"The best heads among us,"—he went on,—*"les meilleurs têtes*—have long since become convinced of this; all nations are, essentially, alike; only introduce good institutions, and there 's an end of the matter. One may even conform to the existing national life; that is our business, the business of men . . . ." (he came near saying: "of statesmen") "who are in the service; but, in case of need, be not uneasy: the institutions will transform that same existence." Márya Dmítrievna, with emotion, backed up Pánshin. "What a clever man this is,"—she thought,—"talking in my house!" Liza said nothing, as she leaned against a window-frame; Lavrétzky also maintained silence; Márfa Timoféevna, who was playing cards in the corner with her friend, muttered something to herself. Pánshin strode up and down the room, and talked eloquently, but with a secret spite: he seemed to be scolding not the whole race, but certain individuals of his ac-

quaintance. In the Kalítins' garden, in a large lilac-bush, dwelt a nightingale, whose first evening notes rang forth in the intervals of this eloquent harangue; the first stars lighted up in the rosy sky, above the motionless crests of the lindens. Lavrétzky rose, and began to reply to Pánshin; an argument ensued. Lavrétzky defended the youth and independence of Russia; he surrendered himself, his generation as sacrifice, —but upheld the new men, their convictions, and their desires; Pánshin retorted in a sharp and irritating way, declared that clever men must reform everything, and went so far, at last, that, forgetting his rank of Junior Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber, and his official career, he called Lavrétzky a "laggard conservative," he even hinted,—in a very remote way, it is true,— at his false position in society. Lavrétzky did not get angry, did not raise his voice (he remembered that Mikhalévitch also had called him a laggard—only, a Voltairian)—and calmly vanquished Pánshin on every point. He demonstrated to him the impossibility of leaps and supercilious reforms, unjustified either by a knowledge of the native land or actual faith in an ideal, even a negative ideal; he cited, as an example, his own education, and demanded, first of all, a recognition of national truth and submission to it,—that submission without which even boldness against falsehood is impossible; he did not evade,

in conclusion, the reproach—merited, in his opinion—of frivolous waste of time and strength.

"All that is very fine!"—exclaimed the enraged Pánshin, at last:—"Here, you have returned to Russia,—what do you intend to do?"

"Till the soil,"—replied Lavrétzky:—"and try to till it as well as possible."

"That is very praiseworthy, there 's no disputing that,"—rejoined Pánshin:—"and I have been told, that you have already had great success in that direction; but you must admit, that not every one is fitted for that sort of occupation. . . ."

"*Une nature poétique,*"—began Márya Dmítrievna,—"of course, cannot till the soil . . . . *et puis,* you are called, Vladímir Nikoláitch, to do everything *en grand.*"

This was too much even for Pánshin: he stopped short, and the conversation stopped short also. He tried to turn it on the beauty of the starry sky, on Schubert's music—but, for some reason, it would not run smoothly; he ended, by suggesting to Márya Dmítrievna, that he should play picquet with her.—"What! on such an evening?"—she replied feebly; but she ordered the cards to be brought.

Pánshin, with a crackling noise, tore open the fresh pack, while Liza and Lavrétzky, as though in pursuance of an agreement, both rose, and placed themselves beside Márfa Timoféevna.

They both, suddenly, felt so very much at ease that they were even afraid to be left alone together,—and, at the same time, both felt that the embarrassment which they had experienced during the last few days had vanished, never more to return. The old woman stealthily patted Lavrétzky on the cheek, slyly screwed up her eyes, and shook her head several times, remarking in a whisper: " Thou hast got the best of the clever fellow, thanks." Everything in the room became still; the only sound was the faint crackling of the wax candles, and, now and then, the tapping of hands on the table, and an exclamation, or the reckoning of the spots,—and the song, mighty, resonant to the verge of daring, of the nightingale, poured in a broad stream through the window, in company with the dewy coolness.

XXXIV

Liza had not uttered a single word during the course of the dispute between Lavrétzky and Pánshin, but had attentively followed it, and had been entirely on Lavrétzky's side. Politics possessed very little interest for her; but the self-confident tone of the fashionable official (he had never, hitherto, so completely expressed himself) had repelled her; his scorn of Russia had wounded her. It had never entered Liza's head, that she was a patriot; but she was at her ease with Russian people; the Russian turn of mind gladdened her; without any affectation, for hours at a time, she chatted with the overseer of her mother's estate, when he came to town, and talked with him as with an equal, without any lordly condescension. Lavrétzky felt all this: he would not have undertaken to reply to Pánshin alone; he had been talking for Liza only. They said nothing to each other, even their eyes met but rarely; but both understood that they had come very close together that evening, understood that they loved and did not love the same things. On only one point did they differ; but Liza secretly hoped to bring him to God. They sat beside Márfa

Timoféevna, and appeared to be watching her play; and they really were watching it,—but, in the meanwhile, their hearts had waxed great in their bosoms, and nothing escaped them: for them the nightingale was singing, the stars were shining, and the trees were softly whispering, lulled both by slumber and by the softness of the summer, and by the warmth. Lavrétzky surrendered himself wholly to the billow which was bearing him onward,—and rejoiced; but no word can express that which took place in the young girl's pure soul: it was a secret to herself; so let it remain for all others. No one knows, no one has seen, and no one ever will see, how that which is called into life and blossom pours forth and matures grain in the bosom of the earth.

The clock struck ten. Márfa Timoféevna went off to her rooms up-stairs, with Nastásya Kárpovna; Lavrétzky and Liza strolled through the room, halted in front of the open door to the garden, gazed into the dark distance, then at each other—and smiled; they would have liked, it appeared, to take each other by the hand, and talk their fill. They returned to Márya Dmítrievna and Pánshin, whose picquet had become protracted. The last "king" came to an end at length, and the hostess rose, groaning and sighing, from the cushion-garnished arm-chair; Pánshin took his hat, kissed Márya Dmítrievna's hand, remarked that nothing now prevented other

happy mortals from going to bed, or enjoying the night, but that he must sit over stupid papers until the morning dawned, bowed coldly to Liza (he had not expected that in reply to his offer of marriage, she would ask him to wait,—and therefore he was sulking at her)—and went away. Lavrétzky followed him. At the gate they parted; Pánshin aroused his coachman by poking him with the tip of his cane in the neck, seated himself in his drozhky, and drove off. Lavrétzky did not feel like going home; he walked out beyond the town, into the fields. The night was tranquil and bright, although there was no moon; Lavrétzky roamed about on the dewy grass for a long time; he came by accident upon a narrow path; he walked along it. It led him to a long fence, to a wicket-gate; he tried, without himself knowing why, to push it open: it creaked softly, and opened, as though it had been awaiting the pressure of his hand; Lavrétzky found himself in a garden, advanced a few paces along an avenue of lindens, and suddenly stopped short in amazement: he recognised the garden of the Kalítins.

He immediately stepped into a black blot of shadow which was cast by a thick hazel-bush, and stood for a long time motionless, wondering and shrugging his shoulders.

"This has not happened for nothing," he thought.

Everything was silent round about; not a sound was borne to him from the direction of the house. He cautiously advanced. Lo, at the turn in the avenue, the whole house suddenly gazed at him with its dark front; only in two of the upper windows were lights twinkling: in Liza's room, a candle was burning behind a white shade, and in Márfa Timoféevna's bedroom a shrine-lamp was glowing with a red gleam in front of the holy pictures, reflecting itself in an even halo in the golden settings; down-stairs, the door leading out on the balcony yawned broadly, as it stood wide open. Lavrétzky seated himself on a wooden bench, propped his head on his hand, and began to gaze at the door and the window. Midnight struck in the town; in the house, the small clocks shrilly rang out twelve; the watchman beat with a riffle of taps on the board. Lavrétzky thought of nothing, expected nothing; it was pleasant to him to feel himself near Liza, to sit in her garden on the bench, where she also had sat more than once. . . . . The light disappeared in Liza's room.

"Good night, my dear girl," whispered Lavrétzky, as he continued to sit motionless, and without taking his eyes from the darkened window.

Suddenly a light appeared in one of the windows of the lower storey, passed to a second, a third. . . . Some one was walking through the

rooms with a candle. "Can it be Liza? Impossible!" . . . . Lavrétzky half rose to his feet. A familiar figure flitted past, and Liza made her appearance in the drawing-room. In a white gown, with her hair hanging loosely on her shoulders, she softly approached a table, bent over it, set down the candle, and searched for something; then, turning her face toward the garden, she approached the open door, and, all white, light, graceful, paused on the threshold. A quiver ran through Lavrétzky's limbs.

"Liza!"—burst from his lips, in barely audible tones.

She started, and began to stare into the darkness.

"Liza!"—repeated Lavrétzky more loudly, and emerged from the shadow of the avenue.

Liza, in alarm, stretched forth her head, and staggered backward. He called her for the third time, and held out his arms toward her. She left the door, and advanced into the garden.

"Is it you?"—she said.—"Are you here?"

"It is I . . . . . I . . . listen to me,"—whispered Lavrétzky, and, grasping her hand, he led her to the bench.

She followed him without resistance; her pale face, her impassive eyes, all her movements, were expressive of unutterable amazement. Lavrétzky seated her on the bench, and himself took up his stand in front of her.

"I had no thought of coming hither,"—he began:—"I came hither by chance. . . . . I . . . . I . . . I love you,"—he said, with involuntary terror.

Liza slowly glanced at him; apparently, she had only that moment comprehended where she was, and that she was with him. She tried to rise, but could not, and covered her face with her hands.

"Liza,"—said Lavrétzky:—"Liza,"—he repeated, and bowed down at her feet. . . .

Her shoulders began to quiver slightly, the fingers of her pale hands were pressed more tightly to her face.

"What is the matter with you?"—Lavrétzky uttered, and caught the sound of soft sobbing. His heart turned cold. . . . He understood the meaning of those tears. "Can it be that you love me?"—he whispered, and touched her knee.

"Rise," he heard her voice:—"rise, Feódor Iványitch. What is this that you and I are doing?"

He rose, and seated himself by her side on the bench. She was no longer weeping, but was gazing attentively at him with her wet eyes.

"I am frightened: what are we doing?"—she repeated.

"I love you,"—he said again:—"I am ready to give the whole of my life to you."

Again she shuddered, as though something

had stung her, and raised her gaze heavenward.

"All this is in God's power,"—she said.

"But do you love me, Liza? Shall we be happy?"

She dropped her eyes; he softly drew her to him, and her head sank upon his shoulder. . . . He turned her head a little to one side, and touched her pale lips.

Half an hour later, Lavrétzky was standing before the wicket. He found it locked, and was obliged to leap across the fence. He returned to the town, and walked through the sleeping streets. A sensation of great, of unexpected happiness filled his soul; all doubts had died within him. "Vanish, past, dark spectre," he thought: "she loves me, she will be mine." All at once, it seemed to him that in the air, over his head, wondrous, triumphant sounds rang out; the sounds rolled on still more magnificently; in a chanting, mighty flood they streamed on,—and in them, so it seemed, all his happiness was speaking and singing. He glanced around him: the sounds were floating from two upper windows of a tiny house.

"Lemm!"—cried Lavrétzky, and ran to the house.—"Lemm! Lemm!"—he repeated loudly.

The sounds died away, and the figure of the old man in his dressing-gown, with breast bare,

and hair dishevelled, made its appearance at the window.

"Aha!"—he said, with dignity:—"is that you?"

"Christofór Feódoritch! what splendid music! For God's sake, let me in."

The old man, without uttering a word, with a majestic movement of the arm flung the door-key out of the window into the street. Lavrétzky briskly ran up-stairs, entered the room, and was on the point of rushing at Lemm, but the latter imperiously motioned him to a chair; he said, abruptly, in Russian: "Sit down and listen!" seated himself at the piano, gazed proudly and sternly about him, and began to play. It was long since Lavrétzky had heard anything of the sort: a sweet, passionate melody, which gripped the heart from its very first notes; it was all beaming and languishing with inspiration, with happiness, with beauty; it swelled and melted away; it touched everything which exists on earth of precious, mysterious, holy; it breathed forth deathless sadness, and floated away to die in heaven. Lavrétzky straightened himself up and stood there, cold and pale with rapture. Those sounds fairly sank into his soul, which had only just been shaken with the bliss of love; they themselves were flaming with love. "Repeat it,"—he whispered, as soon as the last chord resounded. The old man cast upon him an eagle glance,

struck his breast with his hand, and saying deliberately, in his native language:—"I made that, for I am a great musician,"—he again played his wonderful composition. There was no candle in the room; the light of the rising moon fell aslant through the window; the sensitive air trembled resonantly; the pale, little room seemed a sanctuary, and the head of the old man rose high and inspired in the silvery semi-darkness. Lavrétzky approached and embraced him. At first, Lemm did not respond to his embrace, he even repulsed it with his elbow; for a long time, without moving a single limb, he continued to gaze forth, as before, sternly, almost roughly, and only bellowed a couple of times: "Aha!" At last his transfigured face grew calm, relaxed, and, in reply to Lavrétzky's warm congratulations, he first smiled a little, then fell to weeping, feebly sobbing like a child.

"This is marvellous,"—he said:—"that precisely you should now have come; but I know—I know all."

"You know all?"—ejaculated Lavrétzky, in confusion.

"You have heard me,"—returned Lemm:—"have not you understood that I know all?"

Lavrétzky could not get to sleep until the morning: all night long, he sat on his bed. And Liza did not sleep: she prayed.

XXXV

The reader knows how Lavrétzky had grown up and developed; let us say a few words about Liza's bringing up. She was ten years old when her father died; but he had paid little heed to her. Overwhelmed with business, constantly absorbed in increasing his property, splenetic, harsh, impatient, he furnished money unsparingly for teachers, tutors, clothing, and the other wants of the children; but he could not endure, as he expressed it, "to dandle the squalling brats,"—and he had no time to dandle them: he worked, toiled over his business, slept little, occasionally played cards, worked again; he compared himself to a horse harnessed to a threshing-machine. "My life has rushed by fast," he said on his deathbed, with a proud smile on his parched lips. Márya Dmítrievna, in reality, troubled herself about Liza hardly more than did the father, although she had boasted to Lavrétzky that she alone had reared her children; she had dressed Liza like a doll, in the presence of visitors had patted her on the head, and called her, to her face, a clever child and a darling—and that was all: any regular care wearied the lazy gentlewoman.

During her father's lifetime, Liza had been in the hands of a governess, Mlle. Moreau, from Paris, and after his death she had passed into the charge of Márfa Timoféevna. The reader is acquainted with Márfa Timoféevna; but Mlle. Moreau was a tiny, wrinkled creature, with birdlike ways and a tiny, birdlike mind. In her youth she had led a very dissipated life, and in her riper years she had but two passions left—for dainties and for cards. When she was gorged, was not playing cards, and not chattering, her face instantly assumed an almost deathlike expression: she would sit, and gaze, and breathe, and it was evident that no thought was passing through her head. It was not even possible to call her good-natured: there are also birds which are not good-natured. Whether it was in consequence of her frivolously-spent youth, or of the Paris air, which she had breathed since her childhood,—she harboured within her a certain cheap, general scepticism, which is usually expressed by the words: "*tout ça c'est des bêtises.*" She talked an irregular, but purely Parisian jargon, did not gossip, was not capricious,—and what more could be desired in a governess? On Liza she had little influence; all the more powerful upon her was the influence of her nurse, Agáfya Vlásievna.

The lot of this woman was remarkable. She sprang from a peasant family; at the age of sixteen, they married her to a peasant; but there

was a sharp distinction between her and her sister-peasant women. For twenty years her father had been the village elder, had accumulated a good deal of money, and had petted her. She was a wonderful beauty, the most dashingly-elegant peasant maid in all the country round about, clever, a good talker, daring. Her master, Dmítry Péstoff, the father of Márya Dmítrievna, a modest, quiet man, caught sight of her one day at the threshing, talked with her, and fell passionately in love with her.

Soon afterward, she became a widow; Péstoff, although he was a married man, took her into his house, and clothed her in the style of a house-servant. Agáfya immediately accommodated herself to her new position, exactly as though she had never lived in any other way. Her skin became white, she grew plump; her arms, under their muslin sleeves, became "like fine wheat flour," like those of a cook; the samovár stood constantly on her table; she would wear nothing but velvet and silk, she slept on a feather-bed of down. This blissful life lasted for the space of five years; but Dmítry Péstoff died: his widow, a good-natured gentlewoman, desirous of sparing her husband's memory, was not willing to behave dishonourably toward her rival, the more so, as Agáfya had never forgotten herself before her; but she married her to the cow-herd, and sent her out of her sight. Three years passed.

Once, on a hot summer day, the lady of the manor went to her dairy. Agáfya treated her to such splendid cold cream, bore herself so modestly, and was so neat in person, and so cheerful and satisfied with everything, that her mistress announced to her her pardon, and permitted her to come to the manor-house; and six months later, she had become so attached to her, that she promoted her to the post of housekeeper, and entrusted the entire management to her. Again Agáfya came into power, again she grew plump and white-skinned; her mistress had complete confidence in her. In this manner, five more years elapsed. Again misfortune fell upon Agáfya. Her husband, whom she had had raised to the post of footman, took to drink, began to disappear from the house, and wound up by stealing six of the family's silver spoons, and hiding them—until a convenient opportunity—in his wife's chest. This was discovered. He was again degraded to the rank of cow-herd, and a sentence of disgrace was pronounced upon Agáfya; she was not banished from the house, but she was reduced from the place of housekeeper to that of seamstress, and ordered to wear a kerchief on her head, instead of a cap. To the amazement of all, Agáfya accepted the blow which had overtaken her with humble submission. She was then over thirty years of age, all her children had died, and her husband did not long survive. The time had ar-

rived for her to come to a sense of her position: she did so. She became very taciturn and devout, never missed a single Matins service, nor a single Liturgy, and gave away all her fine clothes. Fifteen years she spent quietly, peacefully, with dignity, quarrelling with no one, yielding to every one. If any one spoke rudely to her,—she merely bowed, and returned thanks for the lesson. Her mistress had forgiven her long since, had removed the ban from her, and had given her a cap from her own head; but she herself refused to remove her kerchief, and always went about in a dark-hued gown; and after the death of her mistress, she became still more quiet and humble. A Russian easily conceives fear and affection; but it is difficult to win his respect: it is not soon given, nor to every one. Every one in the house respected Agáfya; no one even recalled her former sins, as though they had been buried in the earth, along with the old master.

When Kalítin became the husband of Márya Dmítrievna, he wished to entrust the housekeeping to Agáfya; but she declined, "because of the temptation"; he roared at her, she made him a lowly reverence, and left the room. The clever Kalítin understood people; and he also understood Agáfya, and did not forget her. On removing his residence to the town, he appointed her, with her own consent, as nurse to Liza, who had just entered her fifth year.

At first, Liza was frightened by the serious and stern face of her new nurse; but she speedily became accustomed to her, and conceived a strong affection for her. She herself was a serious child; her features recalled the clear-cut, regular face of Kalítin; only, she had not her father's eyes; hers beamed with a tranquil attention and kindness which are rare in children. She did not like to play with dolls, her laughter was neither loud nor long, she bore herself with decorum. She was not often thoughtful, and was never so without cause; after remaining silent for a time, she almost always ended by turning to some one of her elders, with a question which showed that her brain was working over a new impression. She very early ceased to lisp, and already in her fourth year she spoke with perfect distinctness. She was afraid of her father; her feeling toward her mother was undefined,—she did not fear her, neither did she fondle her; but she did not fondle Agáfya either, although she loved only her alone. Agáfya and she were never separated. It was strange to see them together. Agáfya, all in black, with a dark kerchief on her head, with a face thin and transparent as wax, yet still beautiful and expressive, would sit upright, engaged in knitting a stocking; at her feet, in a little armchair, sat Liza, also toiling over some sort of work, or, with her bright eyes uplifted gravely, listening to what Agáfya was relating to her, and

Agáfya did not tell her fairy-stories; in a measured, even voice, she would narrate the life of the Most-pure Virgin, the lives of the hermits, the saints of God, of the holy martyrs; she would tell Liza how the holy men lived in the deserts, how they worked out their salvation, endured hunger and want,—and, fearing not kings, confessed Christ; how the birds of heaven brought them food, and the wild beasts obeyed them; how on those spots where their blood fell, flowers sprang up.—"Yellow violets?"—one day asked Liza, who was very fond of flowers. . . . Agáfya talked gravely and meekly to Liza, as though she felt that it was not for her to utter such lofty and sacred words. Liza listened to her—and the image of the Omnipresent, Omniscient God penetrated into her soul with a certain sweet power, filled her with pure, devout awe, and Christ became for her a person close to her, almost a relative: and Agáfya taught her to pray. Sometimes she woke Liza early, at daybreak, hastily dressed her, and surreptitiously took her to Matins: Liza followed her on tiptoe, hardly breathing; the chill and semi-obscurity of the dawn, the freshness and emptiness of the streets, the very mysteriousness of these unexpected absences, the cautious return to the house, to bed,—all this mingling of the forbidden, the strange, the holy, agitated the little girl, penetrated into the very depths of her being. Agáfya never con-

demned anybody, and did not scold Liza for her pranks. When she was displeased over anything, she simply held her peace; and Liza understood that silence; with the swift perspicacity of a child, she also understood very well when Agáfya was displeased with other people—with Márya Dmítrievna herself, or with Kalítin. Agáfya took care of Liza for a little more than three years; she was replaced by Mlle. Moreau; but the frivolous Frenchwoman, with her harsh manners and her exclamation: "*tout ça c'est des bêtises,*"—could not erase from Liza's heart her beloved nurse: the seeds which had been sown had struck down roots too deep. Moreover, Agáfya, although she had ceased to have charge of Liza, remained in the house, and often saw her nursling. who confided in her as before.

But Agáfya could not get along with Márfa Timoféevna, when the latter came to live in the Kalítin house. The stern dignity of the former "peasant woman" did not please the impatient and self-willed old woman. Agáfya begged permission to go on a pilgrimage, and did not return. Dark rumours circulated, to the effect that she had withdrawn to a convent of Old Ritualists. But the traces left by her in Liza's soul were not effaced. As before, the latter went to the Liturgy as to a festival, prayed with delight, with a certain repressed and bashful enthusiasm, which secretly amazed Márya Dmítrievna not a little, al-

though she put no constraint upon Liza, but merely endeavoured to moderate her zeal, and did not permit her to make an excessive number of prostrations: that was not lady-like manners, she said. Liza studied well,—that is to say, assiduously; God had not endowed her with particularly brilliant capacities, with a great mind; she acquired nothing without labour. She played well on the piano; but Lemm alone knew what it cost her. She read little; she had no "words of her own," but she had thoughts of her own, and she went her own way. It was not for nothing that she resembled her father: he, also, had not been wont to ask others what he should do. Thus she grew up—quietly, at leisure; thus she attained her nineteenth year. She was very pretty, without herself being aware of the fact. An unconscious, rather awkward grace revealed itself in her every movement; her voice rang with the silvery sound of unaffected youth, the slightest sensation of pleasure evoked a winning smile on her lips, imparted a deep gleam and a certain mysterious caress to her sparkling eyes. Thoroughly imbued with the sense of duty, with the fear of wounding any one whatsoever, with a kind and gentle heart, she loved every one in general, and no one in particular; God alone she loved with rapture, timidly, tenderly. Lavrétzky was the first to break in upon her tranquil inner life.

Such was Liza.

XXXVI

At twelve o'clock on the following day, Lavrétzky set out for the Kalítins'. On the way thither, he met Pánshin, who galloped past him on horseback, with his hat pulled down to his very eyebrows. At the Kalítins', Lavrétzky was not admitted,—for the first time since he had known them. Márya Dmítrievna was "lying down,"—so the lackey announced; "they" had a headache. Neither Márfa Timoféevna nor Lizavéta Mikhaílovna was at home. Lavrétzky strolled along the garden, in anxious hope of meeting Liza, but saw no one. He returned a couple of hours later, and received the same answer, in connection with which the lackey bestowed a sidelong glance upon him. It seemed to Lavrétzky impolite to intrude himself upon them for a third time that day—and he decided to drive out to Vasílievskoe, where, without reference to this, he had business to attend to. On the way he constructed various plans, each more beautiful than the other; but in his aunt's hamlet, sadness fell upon him; he entered into conversation with Antón; the old man, as though expressly, had nothing but cheerless thoughts in his

mind. He narrated to Lavrétzky, how Glafíra Petróvna, before her death, had bitten her own hand,—and, after a short pause, he added: "Every man, master—dear little father, is given to devouring himself." It was already late when Lavrétzky set out on the return journey. The sounds of the preceding day took possession of him, the image of Liza arose in his soul in all its gentle transparency; he melted at the thought that she loved him,—and drove up to his little town-house in a composed and happy frame of mind.

The first thing which struck him on entering the anteroom was the scent of patchouli, which was very repulsive to him; several tall trunks and coffers were standing there. The face of the valet who ran forth to receive him seemed to him strange. Without accounting to himself for his impressions, he crossed the threshold of the drawing-room. . . . . From the couch there rose to greet him a lady in a black gown with flounces, and raising a batiste handkerchief to her pale face, she advanced several paces, bent her carefully-dressed head,—and fell at his feet. . . . Then only did he recognise her: the lady was—his wife.

It took his breath away. . . He leaned against the wall.

"Theodore, do not drive me away!"—she said in French, and her voice cut his heart like a knife.

He glanced at her without comprehending, yet he immediately noticed that she had grown pale and thin.

"Theodore,"—she went on, from time to time raising her eyes, and cautiously wringing her wondrously-beautiful fingers, with rosy, polished nails:—"Theodore, I am to blame toward you, deeply to blame,—I will say more, I am a criminal; but do you listen to me; repentance tortures me, I have become a burden to myself, I could not longer endure my position; how many times have I meditated returning to you, but I feared your wrath;—I have decided to break every connection with the past .... *puis, j'ai été si malade,* —I have been so ill,"—she added, and passed her hand across her brow and her cheek,—"I have taken advantage of the rumour of my death which had got into circulation, I have abandoned everything; without halting, day and night I have hastened hither; I have hesitated, for a long time, to present myself before you, my judge—*paraître devant vous, mon juge,*—but, at last, I made up my mind, remembering your invariable kindness, to come to you; I learned your address in Moscow. Believe me," she continued, softly rising from the floor, and seating herself on the very edge of an arm-chair:—"I have often meditated death, and I would have summoned up sufficient courage to take my life—akh, life is now an intolerable burden to me!—but the thought of my

daughter, of my Ádotchka, held me back; she is here, she is asleep in the adjoining room, poor child! She is weary,—you shall see her: she, at least, is not guilty toward you,—and I am so unhappy, so unhappy!"—exclaimed Mme. Lavrétzky, and burst into tears.

Lavrétzky came to himself, at last; he separated himself from the wall, and moved toward the door.

"You are going away?"—said his wife, in despair:—"oh, this is cruel!—Without saying one word to me, without even one reproach. . . . This scorn is killing me, this is terrible!"

Lavrétzky stopped short.

"What is it that you wish to hear from me?"—he uttered, in a toneless voice.

"Nothing, nothing,"—she caught him up with vivacity:—"I know that I have no right to demand anything;—I am not a fool, believe me;—I do not hope, I do not dare to hope for your forgiveness;—I only venture to entreat you, that you will give me directions what I am to do, where I am to live?—I will fulfil your command, whatever it may be, like a slave."

"I have no commands to give you,"—returned Lavrétzky, in the same voice:—"you know, that everything is at an end between us . . . and now more than ever.—You may live where you see fit;—and if your allowance is insufficient . . ."

"Akh, do not utter such dreadful words,"—

Varvára Pávlovna interrupted him:—" spare me, if only . . . . if only for the sake of that angel. . . . ." And, as she said these words, Varvára Pávlovna flew headlong into the next room, and immediately returned with a tiny, very elegantly dressed little girl in her arms. Heavy, ruddy-gold curls fell over her pretty, rosy little face, over her large, black, sleepy eyes; she smiled, and blinked at the light, and clung with her chubby hand to her mother's neck.

"Ada, vois, c'est ton père,"—said Varvára Pávlovna, pushing the curls aside from her eyes, and giving her a hearty kiss:—*" prie le avec moi."*

" C'est ça, papa? "—lisped the little girl, brokenly.

"Oui, mon enfant, n'est ce pas, que tu l'aimes? "

But this was too much for Lavrétzky.

" In what melodrama is it that there is precisely such a scene? "—he muttered, and left the room.

Varvára Pávlovna stood for a while rooted to the spot, slightly shrugged her shoulders, carried the little girl into the other room, undressed her, and put her to bed. Then she got a book, sat down near the lamp, waited for about an hour, and, at last, lay down on the bed herself.

"Eh bien, madame? "—inquired her maid, a Frenchwoman, whom she had brought from Paris, as she removed her corsets.

" Eh bien, Justine,"—she replied;—" he has

aged greatly, but it strikes me that he is as good-natured as ever.—Give me my gloves for the night, prepare my high-necked grey gown for to-morrow; and do not forget the mutton chops for Ada. . . . Really, it will be difficult to obtain them here; but we must make the effort."

"À la guerre, comme à la guerre,"—responded Justine, and put out the light.

XXXVII

For more than two hours Lavrétzky roamed about the streets of the town. The night which he had spent in the suburbs of Paris recurred to his mind. His heart swelled to bursting within him, and in his head, which was empty, and, as it were, stunned, the same set of thoughts kept swirling, —dark, wrathful, evil thoughts. "She is alive, she is here," he whispered, with constantly augmenting amazement. He felt that he had lost Liza. Bile choked him; this blow had struck him too suddenly. How could he so lightly have believed the absurd gossip of a feuilleton, a scrap of paper? "Well, and if I had not believed it, what difference would that have made? I should not have known that Liza loves me; she herself would not have known it." He could not banish from himself the form, the voice, the glances of his wife . . . . and he cursed himself, cursed everything in the world.

Worn out, he arrived toward morning at Lemm's. For a long time, he could produce no effect with his knocking; at last, the old man's head, in a nightcap, made its appearance in the

window, sour, wrinkled, no longer bearing the slightest resemblance to that inspiredly-morose head which, four and twenty hours previously, had gazed on Lavrétzky from the full height of its artistic majesty.

"What do you want?"—inquired Lemm:—"I cannot play every night; I have taken a decoction."—But, evidently, Lavrétzky's face was very strange: the old man made a shield for his eyes out of his hands, stared at his nocturnal visitor, and admitted him.

Lavrétzky entered the room, and sank down on a chair; the old man halted in front of him, with the skirts of his motley-hued, old dressing-gown tucked up, writhing and mumbling with his lips.

"My wife has arrived,"—said Lavrétzky, raising his head, and suddenly breaking into an involuntary laugh.

Lemm's face expressed surprise, but he did not even smile, and only wrapped himself more closely in his dressing-gown.

"You see, you do not know,"—went on Lavrétzky:—"I imagined . . . . I read in a newspaper, that she was no longer alive."

"O—o, you read that a short time ago?"—asked Lemm.

"Yes."

"O—o,"—repeated the old man, and elevated his eyebrows.—"And she has arrived?"

"Yes. She is now at my house; but I . . . I am an unhappy man."

And again he broke into a laugh.

"You are an unhappy man," — repeated Lemm, slowly.

"Christofór Feódoritch,"—began Lavrétzky: —"will you undertake to deliver a note?"

"H'm. May I inquire, to whom?"

"To Liza. . . ."

"Ah,—yes, yes, I understand. Very well. But when must the note be delivered?"

"To-morrow, as early as possible."

"H'm. I can send Katrina, my cook. No, I will go myself."

"And will you bring me the answer?"

"Yes, I will."

Lemm sighed.

"Yes, my poor young friend; you really are —an unhappy man."

Lavrétzky wrote a couple of words to Liza: he informed her of his wife's arrival, begged her to appoint a meeting,—and flung himself on the narrow divan, face to the wall; and the old man lay down on the bed, and tossed about for a long time, coughing and taking sips of his decoction.

Morning came: they both rose. With strange eyes they gazed at each other. Lavrétzky wanted to kill himself at that moment. The cook, Katrina, brought them some bad coffee. The clock struck eight. Lemm put on his hat, and saying

that he had a lesson to give at the Kalítins' at nine, but that he would find a decent pretext, set out. Lavrétzky again flung himself on the little couch, and again, from the depths of his soul, a sorrowful laugh welled up. He thought of how his wife had driven him out of his house; he pictured to himself Liza's position, closed his eyes, and threw his hands behind his head. At last Lemm returned, and brought him a scrap of paper, on which Liza had scrawled with pencil the following words: "We cannot see each other today; perhaps—to-morrow evening. Farewell." Lavrétzky quietly and abstractedly thanked Lemm, and went to his own house.

He found his wife at breakfast; Ada, all curls, in a white frock with blue ribbons, was eating a mutton chop. Varvára Pávlovna immediately rose, as soon as Lavrétzky entered the room, and approached him, with humility depicted on her face. He requested her to follow him to his study, locked the door behind him, and began to stride to and fro; she sat down, laid one hand modestly on the other, and began to watch him with her still beautiful, although slightly painted eyes.

For a long time Lavrétzky did not speak: he felt that he could not control himself; he perceived clearly, that Varvára Pávlovna was not in the least afraid of him, but was assuming the air of being on the very verge of falling into a swoon.

"Listen, madam,"—he began, at last, breathing heavily at times, grinding his teeth:—"there is no necessity for our dissembling with each other; I do not believe in your repentance; and even if it were genuine, it is impossible for me to become reconciled to you, to live with you again."

Varvára Pávlovna compressed her lips and narrowed her eyes. "This is disgust,"—she thought:—"of course! I am no longer even a woman to him."

"It is impossible,"—repeated Lavrétzky, and buttoned up his coat to the throat.—"I do not know why you have taken it into your head to come hither: probably, you have no money left."

"Alas! you are insulting me,"—whispered Varvára Pávlovna.

"However that may be,—you are, unhappily, my wife, nevertheless. I cannot turn you out . . . . and this is what I have to propose to you. You may set out, this very day, if you like, for Lavríki, and live there; the house is good, as you know; you will receive all that is necessary, in addition to your allowance. . . . Do you agree?"

Varvára Pávlovna raised her embroidered handkerchief to her eyes.

"I have already told you,"—she said, her lips twitching nervously:—"that I shall agree to anything whatever you may see fit to do with me: on this occasion, nothing is left for me to do, except

to ask you: will you permit me, at least, to thank you for your magnanimity?"

"No gratitude, I beg of you; it is better so,"—hastily returned Lavrétzky.—"Accordingly,"—he went on, approaching the door:—"I may count upon . . . ."

"To-morrow I shall be at Lavríki,"—said Varvára Pávlovna, respectfully rising from her seat. —"But, Feódor Iványitch" (she no longer called him Theodore) . . . .

"What do you want?"

"I know that I have, as yet, in no way earned my forgiveness; may I hope, at least, in time . . . ."

"Ekh, Varvára Pávlovna,"—Lavrétzky interrupted her:—"you are a clever woman, and as I am not a fool, I know that that is quite unnecessary for you. And I forgave you long ago; but there was always a gulf between us."

"I shall know how to submit,"—replied Varvára Pávlovna, and bowed her head. "I have not forgotten my fault; I should not be surprised to learn that you were even delighted at the news of my death,"—she added gently, pointing slightly with her hand at the copy of the newspaper which lay on the table, forgotten by Lavrétzky.

Feódor Iványitch shuddered: the feuilleton was marked with a pencil. Varvára Pávlovna gazed at him with still greater humility. She was very

pretty at that moment. Her grey Paris gown gracefully clothed her willowy form, which was almost that of a girl of seventeen; her slender, delicate neck encircled with a white collar, her bosom which rose and fell evenly, her arms devoid of bracelets and rings,—her whole figure, from her shining hair to the tip of her barely revealed little boot, was so elegant . . . . .

Lavrétzky swept an angry glance over her, came near exclaiming: " Brava! " came near smiting her in the temple with his fist—and left the room. An hour later, he had already set out for Vasílievskoe, and two hours later, Varvára Pávlovna gave orders that the best carriage in town should be engaged, donned a simple straw hat with a black veil, and a modest mantle, entrusted Ada to Justine, and set out for the Kalítins: from the inquiries instituted by her servant she had learned that her husband was in the habit of going to them every day.

XXXVIII

The day of the arrival of Lavrétzky's wife in town of O * * *, a cheerless day for him, was also a painful day for Liza. She had not succeeded in going down-stairs and bidding her mother "good morning," before the trampling of a horse's hoofs resounded under the window, and with secret terror she beheld Pánshin riding into the yard: "He has presented himself thus early for a definitive explanation,"—she thought—and she was not mistaken; after spending a while in the drawing-room, he suggested that she should go with him into the garden, and demanded her decision as to his fate. Liza summoned up her courage, and informed him that she could not be his wife. He listened to her to the end, as he stood with his side toward her, and his hat pulled down on his brows; courteously, but in an altered tone, he asked her: was that her last word, and had he, in any way, given her cause for such a change in her ideas? then he pressed his hand to his eyes, sighed briefly and abruptly, and removed his hand from his face.

"I have not wished to follow the beaten path," —he said, in a dull voice,—"I have wished to find

my companion after the inclination of the heart; but, evidently, that was not destined to be. Farewell, dream!"—He bowed profoundly to Liza, and returned to the house.

She hoped that he would immediately take his departure; but he went into Márya Dmítrievna's boudoir, and sat with her for about an hour. As he went away, he said to Liza: "*Votre mère vous appelle; adieu à jamais*. . ." mounted his horse, and set off from the very porch at full gallop. Liza went in to Márya Dmítrievna, and found her in tears: Pánshin had communicated to her his misfortune.

"Why hast thou killed me? Why hast thou killed me?"—in this wise did the mortified widow begin her complaints.—"Whom else didst thou want? What! is not he a suitable husband for thee? A Junior Gentleman of the Emperor's Bedchamber! not *interessant!* He might marry any Maid of Honour he chose in Petersburg. And I—I had been hoping so! And hast thou changed long toward him? What has sent this cloud drifting hither—it did not come of itself! Can it be that ninny? A pretty counsellor thou hast found!

"And he, my dear one,"—pursued Márya Dmítrievna:—"how respectful, how attentive, even in his own grief! He has promised not to abandon me. Akh, I shall not survive this! Akh, I have got a deadly headache. Send Palásha to

me. Thou wilt be the death of me, if thou dost not change thy mind,—dost thou hear?" And calling her an ingrate a couple of times, Márya Dmítrievna sent Liza away.

She went to her own room. But before she had time to recover her breath from her explanation with Pánshin and her mother, another thunderstorm broke over her, and this time from a quarter whence she had least expected it. Márfa Timoféevna entered her room, and immediately slammed the door behind her. The old woman's face was pale, her cap was awry, her eyes were flashing, her hands and lips were trembling. Liza was amazed: never before had she seen her sensible and reasonable aunt in such a state.

"Very fine, madam,"—began Márfa Timoféevna, in a tremulous and broken whisper: "very fine indeed! From whom hast thou learned this, my mother? . . . Give me water; I cannot speak."

"Calm yourself, aunty; what is the matter with you?"—said Liza, giving her a glass of water.—"Why, you yourself did not favour Mr. Pánshin."

Márfa Timoféevna set down the glass.

"I cannot drink: I shall knock out my last remaining teeth. What dost thou mean by Panshín? What has Panshín to do with it? Do thou tell me, rather, who taught thee to appoint rendezvous by night—hey? my mother?"

Liza turned pale.

"Please do not think of excusing thyself,"—continued Márfa Timoféevna.—"Schúrotchka herself saw all, and told me. I have forbidden her to chatter, but she does not lie."

"I have made no excuses, aunty,"—said Liza, in a barely audible voice.

"Ah, ah! Now, see here, my mother; didst thou appoint a meeting with him, with that old sinner, that quiet man?"

"No."

"Then how did it come about?"

"I went down-stairs, to the drawing-room, for a book; he was in the garden, and called me."

"And thou wentest? Very fine. And thou lovest him, dost thou not?"

"I do,"—replied Liza, in a tranquil voice.

"Gracious heavens! she loves him!"—Márfa Timoféevna tore off her cap.—"She loves a married man! Hey? she loves!"

"He told me,"—began Liza . . . .

"What did he tell thee, the darling, wha-at was it?"

"He told me that his wife was dead."

Márfa Timoféevna crossed herself.—"The kingdom of heaven be hers,"—she whispered:—"she was a frivolous woman—God forgive her. So that 's how it is: then he 's a widower. Yes, I see that he is equal to anything. He killed off his first wife, and now he 's after another. Thou art a sly one, art thou not? Only, this is what I have to say to thee, niece: in my time, when I was

young, girls were severely punished for such capers. Thou must not be angry with me, my mother; only fools get angry at the truth. I have given orders that he is not to be admitted to-day. I am fond of him, but I shall never forgive him for this. A widower, forsooth! Give me some water. . . But thou art my brave girl, for sending Panshín off with a long face; only, do not sit out nights with that goat's breed,—with men,—do not grieve me, an old woman! For I am not always amiable—I know how to bite, also! . . . . A widower!"

Márfa Timoféevna departed, but Liza sat down in the corner and began to cry. She felt bitter in soul; she had not deserved such humiliation. Her love had not announced its presence by cheerfulness; this was the second time she had wept since the night before. That new, unexpected feeling had barely come to life in her heart when she had had to pay so heavily for it, when strange hands had roughly touched her private secret! She felt ashamed, and pained, and bitter: but there was neither doubt nor terror in her,—and Lavrétzky became all the dearer to her. She had hesitated as long as she did not understand herself; but after that meeting—she could hesitate no longer; she knew that she loved, —and had fallen in love honourably, not jestingly, she had become strongly attached, for her whole life; she felt that force could not break that bond.

XXXIX

Márya Dmítrievna was greatly perturbed when the arrival of Varvára Pávlovna was announced to her; she did not even know whether to receive her; she was afraid of offending Feódor Iványitch. At last, curiosity carried the day. "What of it?"—she said to herself,—"why, she is a relative also,"—and seating herself in her arm-chair, she said to the lackey: "Ask her in!" Several minutes elapsed; the door opened, Varvára Pávlovna approached Márya Dmítrievna swiftly, with barely audible footsteps, and, without giving her a chance to rise from her chair, almost went down on her knees before her.

"Thank you, aunty,"—she began in a touched and gentle voice, in Russian: "thank you! I had not hoped for such condescension on your part; you are as kind as an angel."

As she uttered these words, Varvára Pávlovna unexpectedly took possession of one of Márya Dmítrievna's hands, and pressing it lightly in her pale-lilac gloves, obsequiously raised it to her full, rosy lips. Márya Dmítrievna completely lost her head, on beholding such a beautiful, charmingly-dressed woman, almost on her knees at her

feet; she did not know what to do: she did not wish to withdraw her hand, she wished to give her a seat, and to say something amiable to her; she ended by rising, and kissing Varvára Pávlovna on her smooth, fragrant brow. Varvára Pávlovna was perfectly dumfounded by this kiss.

"Good morning,—*bon jour,*"—said Márya Dmítrievna:—"of course, I had no idea, ... however, of course, I am delighted to see you. You understand, my dear,—it is not for me to sit in judgment between wife and husband."

"My husband is wholly in the right,"—Varvára Pávlovna interrupted her:—"I alone am to blame."

"That is a very praiseworthy sentiment,"—returned Márya Dmítrievna:—"very. Have you been here long? Have you seen him? But sit down, pray."

"I arrived yesterday,"—replied Varvára Pávlovna, meekly seating herself on a chair; "I have seen Feódor Iványitch, I have talked with him."

"Ah! Well, and how does he take it?"

"I was afraid that my sudden arrival would arouse his wrath,"—went on Varvára Pávlovna:—"but he did not deprive me of his presence."

"That is to say, he did not . . . . Yes, yes, I understand,"—ejaculated Márya Dmítrievna.—"He is only rather rough in appearance, but his heart is soft."

"Feódor Iványitch has not forgiven me; he

would not listen to me. . . . But he was so kind as to appoint Lavríki for my place of residence."

"Ah! A very fine estate!"

"I set out thither to-morrow, in compliance with his will; but I considered it my duty to call on you first."

"I am very, very grateful to you, my dear. One must never forget one's relatives. And, do you know, I am astonished that you speak Russian so well. *C'est étonnant!*"

Varvára Pávlovna sighed.

"I have spent too much time abroad, Márya Dmítrievna, I know that; but my heart has always been Russian, and I have not forgotten my native land."

"Exactly so, exactly so; that is the best of all. Feódor Iványitch, however, did not in the least expect you. . . . Yes; believe my experience; *la patrie avant tout.* Akh, please show me,—what a charming mantle that is you have on!"

"Do you like it?"—Varvára Pávlovna promptly dropped it from her shoulders.—"It is a very simple thing, from Madame Baudran."

"That is instantly perceptible. From Madame Baudran. . . . How charming, and what taste! I am convinced that you have brought with you a mass of the most entrancing things. I should like to look them over."

"My entire toilette is at your service, my dearest aunt. If you will permit, I can give your

maid some points. I have a maid-servant from Paris,—a wonderful seamstress."

"You are very kind, my dear. But, really, I am ashamed."

"Ashamed! . . ." repeated Varvára Pávlovna, reproachfully.—"If you wish to make me happy, —command me, as though I belonged to you."

Márya Dmítrievna thawed.

"Vous êtes charmante," she said.—"But why do not you take off your bonnet, your gloves?"

"What? You permit?"—asked Varvára Pávlovna, clasping her hands, as though with emotion.

"Of course; for you will dine with us, I hope. I . . . . I will introduce you to my daughter."—Márya Dmítrievna became slightly confused. "Well! here goes!"—she said to herself.—"She is not quite well to-day."

"Oh, *ma tante,* how kind you are!"—exclaimed Varvára Pávlovna, and raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

A page announced the arrival of Gedeónovsky. The old chatterbox entered, made his bows, and smiled. Márya Dmítrievna presented him to her visitor. He came near being discomfited at first; but Varvára Pávlovna treated him with such coquettish respect, that his ears began to burn, and fibs, scandals, amiable remarks trickled out of his mouth like honey. Varvára Pávlovna listened to him with a repressed smile, and became rather talkative herself. She modestly talked

about Paris, about her travels, about Baden; twice she made Márya Dmítrievna laugh, and on each occasion she heaved another little sigh, as though she were mentally reproaching herself for her ill-timed mirth; she asked permission to bring Ada; removing her gloves, she showed, with her smooth hands washed with soap *à la guimauve,* how and where flounces, ruches, lace, and knots of ribbon were worn; she promised to bring a phial of the new English perfume, Victoria's Essence, and rejoiced like a child when Márya Dmítrievna consented to accept it as a gift; she wept at the remembrance of the feeling she had experienced when, for the first time, she had heard the Russian bells;—"so profoundly did they stagger my very heart,"—she said.

At that moment, Liza entered.

From the morning, from the very moment when, chilled with terror, she had perused Lavrétzky's note, Liza had been preparing herself to meet his wife; she had a presentiment that she should see her, by way of punishment to her own criminal hopes, as she called them. She had made up her mind not to shun her. The sudden crisis in her fate had shaken her to the very foundations; in the course of about two hours her face had grown haggard; but she did not shed a tear. "It serves me right!"—she said to herself, with difficulty and agitation suppressing in her soul certain bitter, spiteful impulses, which

alarmed even herself:—"Come, I must go down!"—she thought, as soon as she heard of Mme. Lavrétzky's arrival, and she went. . . . For a long time she stood outside the door of the drawing-room, before she could bring herself to open it; with the thought: "I am to blame toward her,"—she crossed the threshold, and forced herself to look at her, forced herself to smile. Varvára Pávlovna advanced to meet her as soon as she saw her, and made a slight but nevertheless respectful inclination before her.—"Allow me to introduce myself,"—she began, in an insinuating voice:—"your *maman* is so indulgent toward me, that I hope you will also be . . . . . kind." The expression on Varvára Pávlovna's face, as she uttered this last word, her sly smile, her cold and at the same time soft glance, the movement of her arms and shoulders, her very gown, her whole being, aroused in Liza such a feeling of repulsion, that she could make her no answer, and with an effort she offered her hand. "This young lady despises me,"—thought Varvára Pávlovna, as she warmly pressed Liza's cold fingers, and, turning to Márya Dmítrievna, she said in an undertone: *"Mais elle est délicieuse!"* Liza flushed faintly, insult was audible to her in this exclamation; but she made up her mind not to trust her impressions, and seated herself by the window, at her embroidery-frame. Even there, Varvára Pávlovna did not leave her in peace: she

went up to her, began to praise her taste, her art. . . . Liza's heart beat violently and painfully, she could hardly control herself, she could hardly sit still on her chair. It seemed to her that Varvára Pávlovna knew everything, and, secretly triumphing, was jeering at her. Fortunately for her, Gedeónovsky entered into conversation with Varvára Pávlovna, and distracted her attention. Liza bent over her embroidery-frame, and stealthily watched her. "*He* loved that woman,"—she said to herself. But she immediately banished from her head the thought of Lavrétzky: she was afraid of losing control over herself, she felt that her head was softly whirling. Márya Dmítrievna began to talk about music.

"I have heard, my dear,"—she began:—"that you are a wonderful performer."

"It is a long time since I have played,"—replied Varvára Pávlovna, as she seated herself, in a leisurely manner, at the piano, and ran her fingers in a dashing way over the keys.—"Would you like to have me play?"

"Pray do."

Varvára Pávlovna played a brilliant and difficult étude of Herz in a masterly style. She had a great deal of strength and execution.

"A sylph!"—exclaimed Gedeónovsky.

"Remarkable!"—assented Márya Dmítrievna.—"Well, Varvára Pávlovna, I must confess,"—she said, calling her, for the first time,

by her name:—" you have amazed me; you might even give concerts. We have an old musician here, a German, an eccentric fellow, very learned; he gives Liza lessons; he will simply go out of his mind over you."

" Lizavéta Mikhaílovna is also a musician? "—inquired Varvára Pávlovna, turning her head slightly in her direction.

" Yes, she plays quite well, and loves music; but what does that signify, in comparison with you? But there is a young man here; you ought to make his acquaintance. He is—an artist in soul, and composes very prettily. He is the only one who can fully appreciate you."

" A young man? "—said Varvára Pávlovna.—" Who is he? Some poor fellow? "

" Good gracious,—he 's our chief cavalier, and not among us only—*et à Pétersbourg*. A Junior Gentleman of the Bedchamber, received in the best society. You certainly must have heard of him,—Pánshin, Vladímir Nikoláitch. He is here on a government commission . . . . a future Minister, upon my word! "

" And an artist? "

" An artist in soul, and such a charming fellow. You shall see him. He has been at my house very frequently of late; I have invited him for this evening; I hope that he will come,"—added Márya Dmítrievna, with a gentle sigh and a sidelong bitter smile.

Liza understood the significance of that smile; but she cared nothing for it.

"And is he young?"—repeated Varvára Pávlovna, lightly modulating from one key to another.

"He is eight and twenty—and of the most happy personal appearance. *Un jeune homme accompli,* upon my word."

"A model young man, one may say,"—remarked Gedeónovsky.

Varvára Pávlovna suddenly began to play a noisy Strauss waltz, which started with such a mighty and rapid trill as made even Gedeónovsky start; in the very middle of the waltz, she abruptly changed into a mournful motif, and wound up with the aria from "Lucia": "Fra poco." . . . She had reflected that merry music was not compatible with her situation. The aria from "Lucia," with emphasis on the sentimental notes, greatly affected Márya Dmítrievna.

"What soul!"—she said, in a low tone, to Gedeónovsky.

"A sylph!"—repeated Gedeónovsky, and rolled his eyes heavenward.

Dinner-time arrived. Márfa Timoféevna came down-stairs when the soup was already standing on the table. She treated Varvára Pávlovna very coolly, replying with half-words to her amiabilities, and not looking at her. Varvára Pávlovna herself speedily comprehended that she

could do nothing with the old woman, and ceased to address her; on the other hand, Márya Dmítrievna became more affectionate than ever with her guest: her aunt's discourtesy enraged her. However, Varvára Pávlovna was not the only person at whom Márfa Timoféevna refused to look: she never cast a glance at Liza, either, although her eyes fairly flashed. She sat like a stone image, all sallow, pale, with tightly compressed lips—and ate nothing. Liza seemed to be composed; and, as a matter of fact, all had become more tranquil in her soul; a strange insensibility, the insensibility of the man condemned to death, had come upon her. At dinner Varvára Pávlovna talked little: she seemed to have become timid once more, and spread over her face an expression of modest melancholy. Gedeónovsky alone enlivened the conversation with his tales, although he kept casting cowardly glances at Márfa Timoféevna, and a cough and tickling in the throat seized upon him every time that he undertook to lie in her presence,—but she did not hinder him, she did not interrupt him. After dinner it appeared that Varvára Pávlovna was extremely fond of preference; this pleased Márya Dmítrievna to such a degree, that she even became greatly affected, and thought to herself: —"But what a fool Feódor Iványitch must be: he was not able to appreciate such a woman!"

She sat down to play cards with her and

Gedeónovsky, while Márfa Timoféevna led Liza off to her own rooms up-stairs, saying that she looked ill, that her head must be aching.

"Yes, she has a frightful headache,"—said Márya Dmítrievna, turning to Varvára Pávlovna, and rolling up her eyes.—"I myself have such sick-headaches. . . . ." Liza entered her aunt's room and dropped on a chair, exhausted. Márfa Timoféevna gazed at her for a long time, in silence, knelt down softly in front of her—and began, in the same speechless manner, to kiss her hands, in turn. Liza leaned forward, blushed, and fell to weeping, but did not raise Márfa Timoféevna, did not withdraw her hands: she felt that she had not the right to withdraw them, had not the right to prevent the old woman showing her contrition, her sympathy, asking her pardon for what had taken place on the day before; and Márfa Timoféevna could not have done with kissing those poor, pale, helpless hands—and silent tears streamed from her eyes and from Liza's eyes; and the cat Matrós purred in the wide armchair beside the ball of yarn and the stocking, the elongated flame of the shrine-lamp quivered gently and flickered in front of the holy picture, —in the adjoining room, behind the door, stood Nastásya Kárpovna, and also stealthily wiped her eyes, with a checked handkerchief rolled up into a ball.

XL

And, in the meantime, down-stairs in the drawing-room preference was in progress; Márya Dmítrievna won, and was in high spirits. A footman entered, and announced the arrival of Pánshin.

Márya Dmítrievna dropped her cards, and fidgeted about in her chair; Varvára Pávlovna looked at her with a half-smile, then directed her gaze to the door. Pánshin made his appearance, in a black frock-coat, with a tall English collar, buttoned up to the throat. "It was painful for me to obey, but you see I have come." That was what his freshly-shaved, unsmiling face expressed.

"Goodness, *Woldemar*,"—exclaimed Márya Dmítrievna:—"you always used to enter without being announced!"

Pánshin replied to Márya Dmítrievna merely with a look, bowed courteously to her, but did not kiss her hand. She introduced him to Varvára Pávlovna; he retreated a pace, bowed to her with equal courtesy, but with a shade of elegance and deference, and seated himself at the card-table. The game of preference soon came to an end. Pánshin inquired after Lizavéta Mi-

khaílovna, learned that she did not feel quite well, and expressed his regrets; then he entered into conversation with Varvára Pávlovna, weighing and chiselling clearly every word, in diplomatic fashion, respectfully listening to her replies to the very end. But the importance of his diplomatic tone had no effect on Varvára Pávlovna, did not communicate itself to her. Quite the contrary: she gazed into his face with merry attention, talked in a free-and-easy way, and her delicate nostrils quivered slightly, as though with suppressed laughter. Márya Dmítrievna began to extol her talent; Pánshin inclined his head as politely as his collar permitted, declared that "he was convinced of it in advance,"—and turned the conversation almost on Metternich himself. Varvára Pávlovna narrowed her velvety eyes, and saying, in a low tone: "Why, you also are an artist yourself, *un confrère,*"—added in a still lower tone: "*Venez!*"—and nodded her head in the direction of the piano. That one carelessly dropped word: "*Venez!*"—instantaneously, as though by magic, altered Pánshin's entire aspect. His careworn mien vanished; he smiled, became animated, unbuttoned his coat, and repeating: "What sort of an artist am I, alas! But you, I hear, are a genuine artist"—wended his way, in company with Varvára Pávlovna, to the piano.

"Make him sing his romance:—'When the moon floats,'"—exclaimed Márya Dmítrievna.

"Do you sing?"—said Varvára Pávlovna, illuminating him with a bright, swift glance.—"Sit down."

Pánshin began to decline.

"Sit down,"—she repeated, insistently tapping the back of the chair.

He sat down, coughed, pulled open his collar, and sang his romance.

"Charmant!"—said Varvára Pávlovna:—"you sing beautifully, *vous avez du style,*—sing it again."

She walked round the piano, and took up her stand directly opposite Pánshin. He sang his romance again, imparting a melodramatic quiver to his voice. Varvára Pávlovna gazed intently at him, with her elbows propped on the piano, and her white hands on a level with her lips. Pánshin finished.

"Charmant, charmante idée,"—said she, with the calm confidence of an expert.—"Tell me, have you written anything for the female voice, for a mezzo-soprano?"

"I hardly write anything,"—replied Pánshin;—"you see, I only do this sort of thing in the intervals between business affairs . . . . but do you sing?"

"Yes."

"Oh! do sing something for us,"—said Márya Dmítrievna.

Varvára Pávlovna pushed back her hair from

her flushed cheeks with her hand, and shook her head.

"Our voices ought to go well together,"—she said, turning to Pánshin:—"let us sing a duet. Do you know 'Son geloso,' or 'La ci darem,' or 'Mira la bianca luna'?"

"I used to sing 'Mira la bianca luna,'"—replied Pánshin:—"but I have forgotten it long ago."

"Never mind, we will try it over in an undertone. Let me come."

Varvára Pávlovna sat down at the piano. Pánshin stood beside her. They sang the duet in an undertone, Varvára Pávlovna correcting him several times; then they sang it aloud, then they repeated it twice: "Mira la bianca lu . . . u . . . una." Varvára Pávlovna's voice had lost its freshness, but she managed it very adroitly. Pánshin was timid at first, and sang rather out of tune, but later on he warmed up, and if he did not sing faultlessly, at least he wriggled his shoulders, swayed his whole body, and elevated his hand now and then, like a genuine singer. Varvára Pávlovna played two or three little things of Thalberg's, and coquettishly "recited" a French ariette. Márya Dmítrievna no longer knew how to express her delight; several times she was on the point of sending for Liza; Gedeónovsky, also, found no words and merely rocked his head,—but all of a sudden he yawned, and barely succeeded

in concealing his mouth with his hand. This yawn did not escape Varvára Pávlovna; she suddenly turned her back to the piano, said: *"Assez de musique, comme ça;* let us chat,"—and folded her hands. *"Oui, assez de musique,"*—merrily repeated Pánshin—and struck up a conversation with her,—daring, light, in the French language. "Exactly as in the best Parisian salon,"—thought Márya Dmítrievna, as she listened to their evasive and nimble speeches. Pánshin felt perfectly contented; his eyes sparkled, he smiled; at first, he passed his hand over his face, contracted his brows, and sighed spasmodically when he chanced to meet the glances of Márya Dmítrievna; but later on, he entirely forgot her, and surrendered himself completely to the enjoyment of the half-fashionable, half-artistic chatter. Varvára Pávlovna showed herself to be a great philosopher: she had an answer ready for everything, she did not hesitate over anything, she doubted nothing; it could be seen that she had talked much and often with clever persons of various sorts. All her thoughts, all her feelings, circled about Paris. Pánshin turned the conversation on literature: it appeared that she, as well as he, read only French books: Georges Sand excited her indignation; Balzac she admired, although he fatigued her; in Sue and Scribe she discerned great experts of the heart; she adored Dumas and Féval; in her soul she preferred

Paul de Kock to the whole of them, but, of course, she did not even mention his name. To tell the truth, literature did not interest her greatly. Varvára Pávlovna very artfully avoided everything which could even distantly recall her position; there was not a hint about love in her remarks: on the contrary, they were rather distinguished by severity toward the impulses of passion, by disenchantment, by meekness. Pánshin retorted; she disagreed with him . . . . but, strange to say!—at the very time when words of condemnation, often harsh, were issuing from her lips, the sound of those words caressed and enervated, and her eyes said . . . . . precisely what those lovely eyes said, it would be difficult to state; but their speech was not severe, not clear, yet sweet. Pánshin endeavoured to understand their mysterious significance, endeavoured to talk with his own eyes, but he was conscious that he was not at all successful; he recognised the fact that Varvára Pávlovna, in her quality of a genuine foreign lioness, stood above him, and therefore he was not in full control of himself. Varvára Pávlovna had a habit, while talking, of lightly touching the sleeve of her interlocutor; these momentary touches greatly agitated Vladímir Nikoláitch. Varvára Pávlovna possessed the art of getting on easily with every one; two hours had not elapsed before it seemed to Pánshin that he had known her always, and Liza,

that same Liza, whom he loved, nevertheless, to whom he had offered his hand on the preceding day,—vanished as in a mist. Tea was served; the conversation became still more unconstrained. Márya Dmítrievna rang for her page, and ordered him to tell Liza to come down-stairs if her head felt better. Pánshin, on hearing Liza's name, set to talking about self-sacrifice, about who was the more capable of sacrifice—man or woman? Márya Dmítrievna immediately became agitated, began to assert that woman is the more capable, declared that she would prove it in two words, got entangled, and wound up by a decidedly infelicitous comparison. Varvára Pávlovna picked up a music-book, half-concealed herself with it, and leaning over in the direction of Pánshin, nibbling at a biscuit, with a calm smile on her lips and in her glance, she remarked, in an undertone: *"Elle n'a pas inventé la poudre, la bonne dame."* Pánshin was somewhat alarmed and amazed at Varvára Pávlovna's audacity; but he did not understand how much scorn for him, himself, was concealed in that unexpected sally, and, forgetting the affection and the devotion of Márya Dmítrievna, forgetting the dinners wherewith she had fed him, the money which she had lent him,—he, with the same little smile, the same tone, replied (unlucky wight!): *"Je crois bien,"* —and not even: *"Je crois bien,"* but:—*"Je crois ben!"*

Varvára Pávlovna cast a friendly glance at him, and rose. Liza had entered; in vain had Márfa Timoféevna sought to hold her back: she had made up her mind to endure the trial to the end. Varvára Pávlovna advanced to meet her, in company with Pánshin, on whose face the former diplomatic expression had again made its appearance.

"How is your health?"—he asked Liza.

"I feel better now, thank you,"—she replied.

"We have been having a little music here; it is a pity that you did not hear Varvára Pávlovna. She sings superbly, *un artiste consommée.*"

"Come here, *ma chérie,*"—rang out Márya Dmítrievna's voice.

Varvára Pávlovna instantly, with the submissiveness of a little child, went up to her, and seated herself on a small tabouret at her feet. Márya Dmítrievna had called her for the purpose of leaving her daughter alone with Pánshin, if only for a moment: she still secretly cherished the hope that the girl would come to her senses. Moreover, a thought had occurred to her, to which she desired to give immediate expression.

"Do you know,"—she whispered to Varvára Pávlovna:—"I want to make an effort to reconcile you with your husband: I do not guarantee success, but I will try. You know that he has great respect for me."

Varvára Pávlovna slowly raised her eyes to

Márya Dmítrievna, and clasped her hands prettily.

"You would be my saviour, *ma tante,*"—she said, in a mournful voice:—"I do not know how to thank you for all your affection; but I am too guilty toward Feódor Iványitch; he cannot forgive me."

"But is it possible that you .... really ....." began Márya Dmítrievna, with curiosity.

"Do not ask me,"—Varvára Pávlovna interrupted her, and dropped her eyes.—"I was young, giddy. . . . However, I do not wish to defend myself."

"Well, nevertheless, why not make the effort? Do not despair,"—returned Márya Dmítrievna, and was on the point of patting her on the shoulder, but glanced at her face—and grew timid. "She is a modest, modest creature,"—she thought,—"and exactly like a young girl still."

"Are you ill?"—Pánshin was saying, meanwhile, to Liza.

"Yes, I am not very well."

"I understand you,"—he said, after a rather prolonged silence.—"Yes, I understand you."

"How so?"

"I understand you,"—significantly repeated Pánshin, who simply did not know what to say.

Liza became confused, and then said to herself: "So be it!" Pánshin assumed a mysterious air, and fell silent, gazing severely to one side.

"But the clock has struck eleven, I think,"—remarked Márya Dmítrievna.

The guests understood the hint, and began to take their leave. Varvára Pávlovna was made to promise that she would come to dinner on the morrow, and bring Ada; Gedeónovsky, who had almost fallen asleep as he sat in one corner, offered to escort her home. Pánshin solemnly saluted every one, and at the steps, as he put Varvára Pávlovna into her carriage, he pressed her hand and shouted after her: *"Au revoir!"* Gedeónovsky seated himself by her side; all the way home, she amused herself by placing the tip of her foot on his foot, as though by accident; he became confused, and paid her compliments; she giggled and made eyes at him when the light from a street-lantern fell on the carriage. The waltz which she had herself played, rang in her head, and excited her; wherever she happened to find herself, all she had to do was to imagine to herself lights, a ball-room, the swift whirling to the sounds of music—and her soul went fairly aflame, her eyes darkened strangely, a smile hovered over her lips, something gracefully-bacchic was disseminated all over her body. On arriving at home, Varvára Pávlovna sprang lightly from the carriage,—only fashionable lionesses know how to spring out in that way,—turned to Gedeónovsky, and suddenly burst into a ringing laugh, straight in his face.

"A charming person,"—thought the State Councillor, as he wended his way homeward to his lodgings, where his servant was awaiting him with a bottle of eau de Cologne:—"it is well that I am a staid man . . . . only, what was she laughing at?"

Márfa Timoféevna sat all night long by Liza's pillow.

XLI

Lavrétzky spent a day and a half at Vasílievskoe, and during nearly the whole of that time he wandered about the neighbourhood. He could not remain long in one place: anguish gnawed him; he experienced all the torture of incessant, impetuous, and impotent impulses. He recalled the feeling which had taken possession of his soul on the day following his arrival in the country; he recalled his intentions at that time, and waxed very angry with himself. What could have torn him away from that which he recognised as his duty, the sole task of his future? The thirst for happiness—once more, the thirst for happiness!—"Obviously, Mikhalévitch is right," he thought. "Thou hast wished once more to taste of happiness in life,"—he said to himself,—"thou hast forgotten what a luxury, what an unmerited mercy it is when it has visited a man even once. It was not complete, thou wilt say? But put forth thy claims to complete, genuine happiness! Look about thee: who of those around thee is blissful, who enjoys himself? Yonder, a peasant is driving to the reaping; perchance, he is satisfied with his lot. . . . What of that? Wouldst thou change with him? Remember thy mother: how insignificantly small were her

demands, and what lot fell to her share? Thou hast, evidently, only been bragging before Pánshin, when thou saidst to him, that thou hadst come to Russia in order to till the earth; thou hast come in order to run after the girls in thine old age. The news of thy freedom came, and thou didst discard everything, thou didst forget everything, thou didst run like a little boy after a butterfly." . . . . Liza's image uninterruptedly presented itself before his thoughts; with an effort he drove it away, as he did also another importunate image, other imperturbably-crafty, beautiful, and detested features. Old Antón noticed that his master was not himself; after heaving several sighs outside the door, and several more on the threshold, he made up his mind to approach him, and advised him to drink something warm. Lavrétzky shouted at him, ordered him to leave the room, but afterward begged his pardon; but this caused Antón to grow still more disconsolate. Lavrétzky could not sit in the drawing-room; he felt as though his great-grandfather Andréi were gazing scornfully from the canvas at his puny descendant.—" Ekh, look out for thyself! thou art sailing in shoal water! " his lips, pursed up on one side, seemed to be saying. " Can it be,"—he thought,—" that I shall not be able to conquer myself,—that I shall give in to this—nonsense?" (The severely-wounded in war always call their wounds " nonsense." If a man

could not deceive himself,—he could not live on the earth.) "Am I really a miserable little boy? Well, yes: I have beheld close by, I have almost held in my hand, the possibility of happiness for my whole life—it has suddenly vanished; and in a lottery, if you turn the wheel just a little further, a poor man might become a rich one. If it was not to be, it was not to be,—and that 's the end of the matter. I 'll set to work, with clenched teeth, and I will command myself to hold my tongue; luckily, it is not the first time I have had to take myself in hand. And why did I run away, why am I sitting here, with my head thrust into a bush, like an ostrich? To be afraid to look catastrophe in the face—is nonsense!—Antón!"—he called loudly,—"order the tarantás to be harnessed up immediately. Yes,"—he meditated once more,—"I must command myself to hold my tongue, I must keep a tight rein on myself." . . . .

With such arguments did Lavrétzky strive to alleviate his grief; but it was great and powerful; and even Apraxyéya, who had outlived not so much her mind as every feeling, even Apraxyéya shook her head, and sorrowfully followed him with her eyes, when he seated himself in the tarantás, in order to drive to the town. The horses galloped off; he sat motionless and upright, and stared impassively ahead along the road.

XLII

Liza had written to Lavrétzky on the day before, that he was to come to their house in the evening; but he first went up to his own quarters. He did not find either his wife or his daughter at home; from the servants he learned that she had gone with her to the Kalítins'. This news both startled and enraged him. "Evidently, Varvára Pávlovna is determined not to give me a chance to live,"—he thought, with the excitement of wrath in his heart. He began to stride to and fro, incessantly thrusting aside with his feet and hands the child's toys, the books, and the feminine appurtenances which came in his way; he summoned Justine, and ordered her to remove all that "rubbish."—"*Oui, monsieur,*"—said she, with a grimace, and began to put the room in order, gracefully bending, and giving Lavrétzky to understand, by every movement, that she regarded him as an unlicked bear. With hatred he watched her worn but still "piquant," sneering, Parisian face, her white cuffs, her silken apron, and light cap. He sent her away, at last, and after long wavering (Varvára Pávlovna still did not return) he made up his mind to betake him-

self to the Kalítins',—not to Márya Dmítrievna —(not, on any account, would he have entered her drawing-room, that drawing-room where his wife was), but to Márfa Timoféevna; he remembered that a rear staircase from the maids' entrance led straight to her rooms. This is what Lavrétzky did. Chance favoured him: in the yard he met Schúrotchka; she conducted him to Márfa Timoféevna. He found her, contrary to her wont, alone; she was sitting in a corner, with hair uncovered, bowed over, with her hands clasped in her lap. On perceiving Lavrétzky, the old woman was greatly alarmed, rose briskly to her feet, and began to walk hither and yon in the room, as though in search of her cap.

"Ah, here thou art, here thou art,"—she began, avoiding his gaze, and bustling about—"well, how do you do? Come, what now? What is to be done? Where wert thou yesterday? Well, she has come,—well, yes. Well, we must just . . . . . somehow or other."

Lavrétzky dropped into a chair.

"Come, sit down, sit down,"—went on the old woman.—"Thou hast come straight up-stairs. Well, yes, of course. What? thou art come to look at me? Thanks."

The old woman was silent for a while; Lavrétzky did not know what to say to her; but she understood him.

"Liza . . . . yes, Liza was here just now,"—

went on Márfa Timoféevna, tying and untying the cords of her reticule. " She is not quite well. Schúrotchka, where art thou? Come hither, my mother, why canst thou not sit still? And I have a headache. It must be from *that*—from the singing and from the music."

" From what singing, aunty? "

" Why, of course, they keep singing—what do you call it?—duets. And always in Italian: *tchi-tchi,* and *tcha-tcha,* regular magpies. They begin to drag the notes out, and it 's just like tugging at your soul. Pánshin and that wife of yours. And all that has come about so quickly; already they are on the footing of relatives, they do not stand on ceremony. However, I will say this much: even a dog seeks a refuge; no harm will come to her, so long as people don't turn her out."

" Nevertheless, I must confess that I did not expect this,"—replied Lavrétzky:—" it must have required great boldness."

" No, my dear soul, that is not boldness; it is calculation. The Lord be with her—I want nothing to do with her! They tell me that thou art sending her to Lavríki,—is it true? "

" Yes, I am placing that estate at the disposal of Varvára Pávlovna."

" Has she asked for money? "

" Not yet."

" Well, it will not be long before she does.

But I have only just taken a good look at thee. Art thou well?"

"Yes."

"Schúrotchka,"—suddenly cried Márfa Timoféevna:—"go, and tell Lizavéta Mikhaílovna—that is to say, no, ask her . . . she 's down-stairs, is n't she?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, yes; then ask her: 'Where did she put my book?' She knows."

"I obey, ma'am."

Again the old woman began to bustle about, and to open the drawers of her commode. Lavrétzky sat motionless on his chair.

Suddenly light footsteps became audible on the stairs—and Liza entered. Lavrétzky rose to his feet, and bowed; Liza halted by the door.

"Liza, Lízotchka,"—said Márfa Timoféevna hastily;—"where is my book, where didst thou put my book?"

"What book, aunty?"

"Why, my book; good heavens! However, I did not call thee . . . . Well, it makes no difference. What are you doing there—down-stairs? See here, Feódor Iványitch has come.—How is thy head?"

"It is all right."

"Thou art always saying: 'It is all right.' What 's going on with you down-stairs,—music again?"

"No—they are playing cards."

"Yes, of course, she is up to everything. Schúrotchka, I perceive that thou wishest to have a run in the garden. Go along."

"Why, no, Márfa Timoféevna . . . . . ."

"Don't argue, if you please. Go! Nastásya Kárpovna has gone into the garden alone: stay with her. Respect the old woman."—Schúrotchka left the room.—"Why, where is my cap? Really, now, where has it got to?"

"Pray let me look for it,"—said Liza.

"Sit down, sit down; my own legs have n't given out yet. I must have left it yonder, in my bedroom."

And, casting a sidelong glance at Lavrétzky, Márfa Timoféevna left the room. She was on the point of leaving the door open, but suddenly turned round toward it, and shut it.

Liza leaned against the back of her chair, and gently lifted her hands to her face; Lavrétzky remained standing, as he was.

"This is how we were to meet again,"—he said, at last.

Liza took her hands from her face.

"Yes,"—she said dully:—"we were promptly punished."

"Punished?"—said Lavrétzky. "But what were you punished for?"

Liza raised her eyes to him. They expressed neither grief nor anxiety: they looked smaller

and dimmer. Her face was pale; her slightly parted lips had also grown pale.

Lavrétzky's heart shuddered with pity and with love.

"You wrote to me: 'All is at an end,'"—he whispered:—"Yes, all is at an end—before it has begun."

"We must forget all that,"—said Liza:—"I am glad that you came; I wanted to write to you, but it is better thus. Only, we must make use, as promptly as possible, of these minutes. It remains for both of us to do our duty. You, Feódor Ivánitch, ought to become reconciled to your wife."

"Liza!"

"I implore you to do it; in that way alone can we expiate . . . everything which has taken place. Think it over—and you will not refuse me."

"Liza, for God's sake,—you are demanding the impossible. I am ready to do everything you command; but become reconciled to her *now!* . . . I agree to everything, I have forgotten everything; but I cannot force my heart to . . . . . Have mercy, this is cruel!"

"I do not require from you . . . what you think; do not live with her, if you cannot; but become reconciled,"—replied Liza, and again raised her hand to her eyes.—"Remember your little daughter; do this for me."

"Very well,"—said Lavrétzky, through his teeth:—"I will do it; let us assume that thereby I am fulfilling my duty. Well, and you—in what does your duty consist?"

"I know what it is."

Lavrétzky suddenly started.

"Surely, you are not preparing to marry Pánshin?"—he asked.

Liza smiled almost imperceptibly.

"Oh, no!"—she said.

"Akh, Liza, Liza!"—cried Lavrétzky:—"how happy we might have been!"

Again Liza glanced at him.

"Now you see yourself, Feódor Ivánitch, that happiness does not depend upon us, but upon God."

"Yes, because you . . . ."

The door of the adjoining room opened swiftly, and Márfa Timoféevna entered, with her cap in her hand.

"I have found it at last,"—she said, taking up her stand between Lavrétzky and Liza.—"I had mislaid it myself. That 's what it is to be old, alack! However, youth is no better. Well, and art thou going to Lavríki thyself, with thy wife?"—she added, addressing Feódor Ivánitch.

"With her, to Lavríki?—I do not know,"—he said, after a pause.

"Thou art not going down-stairs?"

"Not to-day."

"Well, very good, as it pleases thee; but I think thou shouldst go down-stairs, Liza. Akh, gracious goodness!—and I have forgotten to give the bullfinch his food. Just wait, I'll be back directly. . . . ."

And Márfa Timoféevna ran out of the room, without putting on her cap.

Lavrétzky went quickly up to Liza.

"Liza,"—he began in a beseeching voice:—"we are parting forever, my heart is breaking,—give me your hand in farewell."

Liza raised her head. Her weary, almost extinct gaze rested on him. . .

"No,"—she said, and drew back the hand which she had already put forward—"no. Lavrétzky"—(she called him thus, for the first time)—"I will not give you my hand. To what end? Go away, I entreat you. You know that I love you,"—she added, with an effort:—"but no . . . no."

And she raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

The door creaked. . . The handkerchief slipped off Liza's knees. Lavrétzky caught it before it fell to the floor, hastily thrust it into his side pocket, and, turning round, his eyes met those of Márfa Timoféevna.

"Lízotchka, I think thy mother is calling thee,"—remarked the old woman.

Liza immediately rose, and left the room.

Márfa Timoféevna sat down again in her corner. Lavrétzky began to take leave of her.

"Fédya,"—she suddenly said.

"What, aunty?"

"Art thou an honourable man?"

"What?"

"I ask thee: art thou an honourable man?"

"I hope so."

"H'm. But give me thy word of honour that thou art an honourable man."

"Certainly.—But why?"

"I know why. Yes, and thou also, my benefactor, if thou wilt think it over well,—for thou art not stupid,—wilt understand thyself why I ask this of thee. And now, farewell, my dear. Thanks for thy visit; and remember the word that has been spoken, Fédya, and kiss me. Okh, my soul, it is hard for thee, I know: but then, life is not easy for any one. That is why I used to envy the flies; here, I thought, is something that finds life good; but once, in the night, I heard a fly grieving in the claws of a spider,—no, I thought, a thundercloud hangs over them also. What is to be done, Fédya? but remember thy word, nevertheless.—Go."

Lavrétzky emerged from the back entrance, and was already approaching the gate . . . when a lackey overtook him.

"Márya Dmítrievna ordered me to ask you to

be so good as to come to her,"—he announced to Lavrétzky.

"Say to her, my good fellow, that I cannot at present . . ." began Feódor Iványitch.

"She ordered me to entreat you urgently,"—went on the lackey:—"she ordered me to say, that she is at home."

"But have the visitors gone?"—asked Lavrétzky.

"Yes, sir,"—returned the lackey, and grinned.

Lavrétzky shrugged his shoulders, and followed him.

XLIII

Márya Dmítrievna was sitting alone, in her boudoir, in a sofa-chair, and sniffing eau de Cologne; a glass of orange-flower water was standing beside her, on a small table. She was excited, and seemed to be timorous.

Lavrétzky entered.

"You wished to see me,"—he said, saluting her coldly.

"Yes,"—returned Márya Dmítrievna, and drank a little of the water. "I heard that you went straight up-stairs to aunty; I gave orders that you should be requested to come to me: I must have a talk with you. Sit down, if you please."—Márya Dmítrievna took breath.—"You know,"—she went on:—"that your wife has arrived?"

"That fact is known to me,"—said Lavrétzky.

"Well, yes,—that is, I meant to say, she came to me, and I received her; that is what I wish to have an explanation about with you now, Feódor Iványitch. I, thank God, have won universal respect, I may say, and I would not do anything improper for all the world. Although I foresaw that it would be disagreeable to you, still, I

could not make up my mind to refuse her, Feódor Iványitch; she is my relative—through you: put yourself in my place—what right had I to turn her out of my house?—You agree with me?"

"There is no necessity for your agitating yourself, Márya Dmítrievna,"—returned Lavrétzky: "you have behaved very well indeed; I am not in the least angry. I have not the slightest intention of depriving Varvára Pávlovna of the right to see her acquaintances; I only refrained from entering your apartments to-day because I wished to avoid meeting her,—that was all."

"Akh, how delighted I am to hear that from you, Feódor Iványitch,"—exclaimed Márya Dmítrievna:—"however, I always expected this from your noble sentiments. But that I should feel agitated, is not wonderful: I am a woman and a mother. And your wife . . . . of course, I cannot judge between her and you—I told her so myself; but she is such an amiable lady, that she cannot cause anything but pleasure."

Lavrétzky laughed, and played with his hat.

"And this is what I wished to say to you, Feódor Iványitch,"—went on Márya Dmítrievna, moving a little nearer to him:—"if you had only seen how modestly, how respectfully she behaves!—Really, it is touching. But if you had heard how she speaks of you! 'I am wholly culpable with regard to him,' she says; 'I did not know how to appreciate him,' she says; 'he is

an angel,' she says, 'not a man.' Truly, she did say that, 'an angel.' She is so penitent . . . . I never beheld such penitence, I give you my word!"

"Well, Márya Dmítrievna,"—said Lavrétzky:—"permit me to ask you a question: I am told that Varvára Pávlovna has been singing for you; did she sing during her repentance—or how?" . . . .

"Akh, are n't you ashamed to talk like that! She sang and played merely with the object of giving me pleasure, because I begged, almost commanded her to do so. I perceive that she is distressed—so distressed, I wonder how I can divert her. And I had heard that she had such a fine talent.—Upon my word, Feódor Iványitch, she is a completely crushed, overwhelmed woman—ask Sergyéi Petróvitch if she is not, *tout à fait*,—what have you to say to that?"

Lavrétzky simply shrugged his shoulders.

"And then, what a little angel that Ada of your is, what a darling!—How pretty she is, how clever! how well she talks French; and she understands Russian—she called me *tyótenka* [aunty]. And do you know, as for being shy, like nearly all children of her age,—there is no shyness about her. She is awfully like you, Feódor Iványitch. Her eyes, her brows . . . well, she 's you all over again, your perfect image. I am not very fond of such small chil-

dren, I must confess; but I have simply lost my heart to your little daughter."

"Márya Dmítrievna,"—exclaimed Lavrétzky, suddenly:—"allow me to ask you why you are pleased to say all this to me?"

"Why?"—again Márya Dmítrievna sniffed at her eau de Cologne, and sipped her water:—"I say it, Feódor Iványitch, because . . . . you see, I am a relative, I take the closest interest in you. . . . I know that you have the very kindest of hearts. Hearken to me, *mon cousin*,—I am a woman of experience, and I am not talking at random: forgive, forgive your wife."—Márya Dmítrievna's eyes suddenly filled with tears.—"Reflect: youth, inexperience . . . well, perhaps, a bad example—she had not the sort of a mother who might have put her on the right road. Forgive her, Feódor Iványitch; she has been sufficiently punished."

Tears trickled down Márya Dmítrievna's cheeks; she did not wipe them away: she loved to weep. Lavrétzky sat as on hot coals. "My God,"—he thought,—"what sort of torture, what sort of a day has fallen to my lot!"

"You do not answer,"—began Márya Dmítrievna again:—"what am I to understand by that?—is it possible that you can be so cruel? No, I will not believe that. I feel that my words have convinced you. Feódor Iványitch, God will reward you for your kindness of heart,

and you will now receive your wife from my hands. . . ."

Lavrétzky involuntarily rose from his chair; Márya Dmítrievna also rose, and stepping briskly behind a screen, led forth Varvára Pávlovna. Pale, half-fainting, with eyes cast down, she seemed to have renounced every thought, every impulse of her own—to have placed herself wholly in the hands of Márya Dmítrievna.

Lavrétzky retreated a pace.

" You were here? "—he exclaimed.

"Do not blame her,"—said Márya Dmítrievna, hastily;—" she did not wish to remain on any account whatever, but I ordered her to stay, and placed her there behind the screen. She assured me that it would only make you more angry; but I would not listen to her; I know you better than she does. Receive your wife from my hands; go, Várya, be not afraid, fall at your husband's feet " (she tugged at her hand)—" and my blessing on you! . . . ."

" Wait, Márya Dmítrievna,"—Lavrétzky interrupted her, in a dull, but quivering voice:—" you are, probably, fond of sentimental scenes," (Lavrétzky was not mistaken: Márya Dmítrievna had retained from her boarding-school days a passion for a certain theatricalness); " they amuse you; but others suffer from them. However, I will not discuss the matter with you; in *this* scene you are not the principal actor. What

do *you* want of me, madam?"—he added, addressing his wife. "Have not I done for you all that I could? Do not retort, that you have not plotted this meeting; I shall not believe you,—and you know that I cannot believe you. What, then, do you want? You are clever,—you never do anything without an object. You must understand that I am not capable of living with you as I used to live; not because I am angry with you, but because I have become a different man. I told you that on the day after your return, and you yourself, at that moment, acquiesced with me in your own soul. But you wish to reinstate yourself in public opinion; it is not enough for you to live in my house, you want to live under one roof with me,—is not that the truth?"

"I want you to forgive me,"—said Varvára Pávlovna, without raising her eyes.

"She wants you to forgive her,"—repeated Márya Dmítrievna.

"And not for my own sake, but for Ada's,"—whispered Varvára Pávlovna.

"Not for her sake, but for Ada's,"—repeated Márya Dmítrievna.

"Very good. You wish that?"—ejaculated Lavrétzky, with an effort. "As you like, I agree to that."

Varvára Pávlovna cast a swift glance at him, and Márya Dmítrievna cried out:—"Well,

God be praised!"—and again tugged at Varvára Pávlovna's hand. "Now receive from me . . . . ."

"Wait, I tell you,"—Lavrétzky interrupted her. "I consent to live with you, Varvára Pávlovna,"—he continued:—"That is to say, I will take you to Lavríki, and I will live with you as long as my strength holds out, and then I shall go away,—and return now and then. You see, I do not wish to deceive you; but do not demand anything more. You yourself would smile, were I to comply with the desire of your respected relative, and press you to my heart, and assure you that . . . . there had been no past, that the felled tree could burst into blossom once more. But I perceive that I must submit. You will not understand that word; . . . . it matters not. I repeat, I will live with you . . . . or, no, I cannot promise that . . . I will join you, I will regard you again as my wife. . . . ."

"But give her your hand on that, at least,"—said Márya Dmítrievna, whose tears were long since dried up.

"Up to the present moment, I have not deceived Varvára Pávlovna,"—returned Lavrétzky;—"she will believe me as it is. I will take her to Lavríki;—and recollect, Varvára Pávlovna: our compact will be regarded as broken just as soon as you leave that place. And now, permit me to withdraw."

He bowed to both ladies, and hastily quitted the room.

"You are not taking her with you,"—called Márya Dmítrievna after him. . . . "Let him alone,"—Varvára Pávlovna whispered to her, and immediately threw her arms round her, began to utter thanks, to kiss her hands, and to call her her saviour.

Márya Dmítrievna accepted her caresses with condescension; but in her secret soul she was pleased neither with Lavrétzky nor with Varvára Pávlovna, nor with the whole scene which she had planned. There had turned out to be very little sentimentality; Varvára Pávlovna, in her opinion, should have flung herself at her husband's feet.

"How was it that you did not understand me?"—she commented:—"why, I told you: 'fall at his feet.'"

"It was better thus, dear aunty; do not disturb yourself—everything is all right,"—insisted Varvára Pávlovna.

"Well, and he is as cold as ice,"—remarked Márya Dmítrievna. "Even if you did not weep, why, I fairly overflowed before him. He means to shut you up in Lavríki. The idea,—and you cannot even come to see me! All men are unfeeling,"—she said, in conclusion, and shook her head significantly.

"On the other hand, women know how to

value kindness and magnanimity,"—said Varvára Pávlovna, and softly dropping on her knees before Márya Dmítrievna, she embraced the latter's corpulent form with her arms, and pressed her face against her. That face wore a quiet smile, but Márya Dmítrievna's tears were flowing again.

And Lavrétzky went home, locked himself up in his valet's room, flung himself on the divan, and lay there until the morning.

XLIV

The next day was Sunday. The chiming of the bells for the early Liturgy did not awaken Lavrétzky—he had not closed an eye all night long—but it did remind him of another Sunday, when, at the wish of Liza, he had gone to church. He hastily rose; a certain secret voice told him that he would see her there again to-day. He noiselessly quitted the house, ordered Varvára Pávlovna to be informed that he would return to dinner, and with great strides wended his way thither, whither the monotonously-mournful chiming summoned him. He arrived early: there was hardly any one in the church; a chanter in the choir was reading the Hours; his voice, occasionally broken by a cough, boomed on in measured cadence, now rising, now falling. Lavrétzky took up his stand not far from the entrance. The prayerfully inclined arrived one by one, paused, crossed themselves, bowed on all sides;[1] their footsteps resounded in the emptiness and silence, distinctly re-echoing from the arches overhead. A decrepit little old woman, in an ancient hooded cloak, knelt down beside Lavrét-

[1] That is—they figuratively begged the pardon of all whom they might have offended, before entering on the Church service. The officiating priest does the same.—Translator.

zky, and began to pray assiduously; her yellow, toothless, wrinkled face expressed intense emotion; her red eyes gazed fixedly upward at the holy picture on the ikonostásis; her bony hand kept incessantly emerging from under her cloak, and slowly but vigorously made a great, sweeping sign of the cross. A peasant, with a thick beard and a surly face, tousled and dishevelled, entered the church, went down at once on both knees, and immediately set to crossing himself, hastily flinging back his head and shaking it after every prostration. Such bitter woe was depicted on his countenance, and in all his movements, that Lavrétzky made up his mind to approach and ask him what was the matter. The peasant started back timidly and roughly, and looked at him. . . . "My son is dead,"—he said, in hasty accents—and again began to prostrate himself to the floor. "What can take the place, for them, of the consolation of the church?"—Lavrétzky thought,—and tried to pray himself; but his heart had grown heavy and hard, and his thoughts were far away. He was still expecting Liza—but Liza did not come. The church began to fill with people; still she did not come. The Liturgy began, the deacon had already read the Gospel, the bell had pealed for the hymn "Worthy";[1]

[1] "Worthy and right is it, to bow down to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, to the Trinity, consubstantial and indivisible"—at a very solemn point, and quite late in the Liturgy.—TRANSLATOR.

Lavrétzky moved a little,—and suddenly caught sight of Liza. She had arrived before him, but he had not descried her; crowded into the space between the wall and the choir, she neither glanced around nor moved. Lavrétzky did not take his eyes from her until the very end of the Liturgy: he was bidding her farewell. The congregation began to disperse, but she still stood on; she seemed to be awaiting Lavrétzky's departure. At last, she crossed herself for the last time, and went away, without looking round; she had only a maid with her. Lavrétzky followed her out of the church, and overtook her in the street; she was walking very rapidly, with her head bowed and her veil lowered over her face.

"Good morning, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna,"—said he, loudly, with forced ease:—"may I accompany you?"

She said nothing; he walked along by her side.

"Are you satisfied with me?"—he asked her, lowering his voice.—"You have heard what took place last night?"

"Yes, yes,"—she said in a whisper:—"you did well."

And she walked on faster than ever.

"You are satisfied?"

Liza only nodded her head.

"Feódor Iványitch,"—she began, in a composed, but weak voice:—"I have wanted to ask you: do not come to our house again; go away as

speedily as possible; we can see each other later on,—sometime, a year hence. But now, do this for me; comply with my request, for God's sake."

"I am ready to obey you in all things, Lizavéta Mikhaílovna; but is it possible that we are to part thus? will you not say a single word to me?"

"Feódor Ivánitch, here you are now, walking by my side. But you are already far away from me. And not you alone, but also . . . ."

"Finish, I entreat you!"—exclaimed Lavrétzky:—"what is it that you mean to say?"

"You will hear, perhaps . . . . but whatever happens, forget . . . no, do not forget me,—remember me."

"I forget you! . . . ."

"Enough; farewell. Do not follow me."

"Liza . . ."—Lavrétzky was beginning.

"Farewell, farewell!"—she repeated, dropped her veil still lower, and advanced almost at a run.

Lavrétzky gazed after her, and dropping his head, went back down the street. He hit upon Lemm, who was also walking along, with his hat pulled down on his nose, and staring at the ground under his feet.

They stared at each other in silence.

"Well, what have you to say?"—said Lavrétzky at last.

"What have I to say?"—returned Lemm surlily:—"I have nothing to say. Everything is

dead, and we are dead. (Alles ist todt und wir sind todt.) You are going to the right, I think?"

"Yes."

"Then I go to the left. Good-bye."

On the following morning, Feódor Iványitch and his wife set out for Lavríki. She drove in front, in the carriage, with Ada and Justine; he came behind, in his tarantás. The pretty little girl never quitted the carriage-window during the whole journey; she was surprised at everything: at the peasants, the peasant women, the wells, the shaft-arches, the carriage-bells, at the multitude of jackdaws; Justine shared her surprise. Varvára Pávlovna laughed at their comments and exclamations. . . She was in high spirits; before their departure from the town of O * * * she had had an explanation with her husband.

"I understand your position,"—she had said to him,—and he, from the expression of her clever eyes, was able to conclude that she did fully understand his position,—"but you must do me the justice, at least, to say that I am easy to live with; I shall not obtrude myself upon you, embarrass you; I wanted to assure Ada's future. I need nothing further."

"Yes, and you have attained your object,"—said Feódor Iványitch.

"My sole idea now is to shut myself up in the wilds; I shall forever remember your good deed in my prayers. . . ."

"Faugh! . . . enough of that,"—he interrupted her.

"And I shall know how to respect your independence, and your repose,"—she completed her phrase, which she had prepared in advance.

Lavrétzky had made her a low bow. Varvára Pávlovna understood that her husband, in his soul, was grateful to her.

On the second day, toward the evening, they reached Lavríki; a week later, Lavrétzky set off for Moscow, leaving his wife five thousand rubles for her expenses—and the day after Lavrétzky's departure, Pánshin, whom Varvára Pávlovna had begged not to forget her in her isolation, made his appearance. She gave him the warmest sort of a welcome, and until late into the night the lofty rooms of the house and the very garden rang with the sounds of music, singing, and merry French speeches. Pánshin visited Varvára Pávlovna for three days; when he took leave of her, and warmly pressed her beautiful hands, he promised to return very soon—and he kept his promise.

XLV

Liza had a separate little room, on the second story of her mother's house, small, clean, bright, with a white bed, pots of flowers in the corners and in front of the holy pictures, with a tiny writing-table, a case of books, and a crucifix on the wall. This little chamber was called the nursery; Liza had been born in it. On returning to it from church, where she had seen Lavrétzky, she put everything in order, even more carefully than usual, wiped the dust off everything, looked over and tied up with ribbons her note-books and the letters of her friends, locked all the drawers, watered the plants, and touched every flower with her hand. She did all this without haste, without noise, with a certain touched and tranquil solicitude on her face. She halted, at last, in the middle of the room, slowly looked around her, and stepping up to the table over which hung the crucifix, she knelt down, laid her head on her clasped hands, and remained motionless.

Márfa Timoféevna entered, and found her in this position. Liza did not notice her entrance. The old woman went outside the door, on tiptoe, and gave vent to several loud coughs. Liza

rose quickly to her feet, and wiped her eyes, in which glittered clear tears which had not fallen.

"I see that thou hast been arranging thy little cell again,"—said Márfa Timoféevna, and bent low over a pot containing a young rose-bush:—"what a splendid perfume it has!"

Liza gazed thoughtfully at her aunt.

"What a word you have uttered!"—she whispered.

"What sort of a word, what word?"—interposed the old woman, vivaciously:—"what dost thou mean?—This is dreadful,"—she said, suddenly tearing off her cap, and seating herself on Liza's bed:—"this is beyond my strength! today is the fourth day that I seem to be seething in a kettle; I can no longer pretend that I notice nothing,—I cannot see thee growing pale, withering away, weeping,—I cannot, I cannot!"

"Why, what is the matter with you, aunty?"—said Liza:—"I am all right. . . ."

"All right?"—exclaimed Márfa Timoféevna:—"tell that to others, but not to me! All right! But who was it that was on her knees just now? whose eyelashes are still wet with tears? All right! Why, look at thyself, what hast thou done to thy face, what has become of thine eyes?—All right! As though I did not know all!"

"It will pass off, aunty; give me time."

"It will pass off, but when? O Lord God, my Master! is it possible that thou didst love him

so? why, he is an old man, Lízotchka. Well, I do not dispute that he is a good man, he does not bite; but what does that signify? we are all good people: the world is large, there will always be plenty of that sort."

"I tell you, that it will all pass off, it is all over already."

"Listen, Lízotchka, to what I have to say to thee,"—said Márfa Timoféevna, suddenly, making Liza sit down beside her on the bed, and adjusting now her hair, now her kerchief.—"It only seems to you, while it is fresh, that your grief is beyond remedy. Ekh, my darling, for death alone there is no remedy! Only say to thyself: 'I won't give in—so there now!' and afterward thou wilt be amazed thyself—how soon, how well, it will pass off. Only have patience."

"Aunty,"—replied Liza:—"it is already past, all is over already."

"Past—over—forsooth! Why, even thy little nose has grown pointed, and thou sayest: 'It is over—it is over!'"

"Yes, it is over, aunty, if you will only help me,"—cried Liza, with sudden animation, and threw herself on Márfa Timoféevna's neck.—"Dear aunty, be my friend, help me; do not be angry, understand me."

"Why, what is this, what is this, my mother? Don't frighten me, please; I shall scream in an-

other minute; don't look at me like that: tell me quickly what thou meanest?"

"I . . . I want . . . . ." Liza hid her face in Márfa Timoféevna's bosom. . . . "I want to enter a convent,"—she said, in a dull tone.

The old woman fairly leaped on the bed.

"Cross thyself, my mother, Lízotchka; come to thy senses: God be with thee, what dost thou mean?"—she stammered at last: "lie down, my darling, sleep a little: this comes from lack of sleep, my dear."

Liza raised her head, her cheeks were burning.

"No, aunty,"—she articulated, "do not speak like that. I have made up my mind, I have prayed, I have asked counsel of God; all is ended, my life with you is ended. Such a lesson is not in vain; and it is not the first time I have thought of this. Happiness was not suited to me; even when I cherished hopes of happiness, my heart was always heavy. I know everything, my own sins and the sins of others, and how papa acquired his wealth; I know everything. All that must be atoned for by prayer—atoned for by prayer. I am sorry for all of you—I am sorry for mamma, for Lyénotchka; but there is no help for it; I feel that I cannot live here; I have already taken leave of everything, I have made my reverence to everything in the house for the last time; something is calling me hence; I am weary; I want to shut myself up forever. Do not hold

me back, do not dissuade me; help me, or I will go away alone."

Márfa Timoféevna listened in terror to her niece.

"She is ill, she is raving,"—she thought:—"I must send for a doctor; but for which? Gedeónovsky was praising some one the other day; he's always lying,—but, perhaps, he told the truth that time." But when she became convinced that Liza was not ill, and was not raving, when to all her objections Liza steadfastly made one and the same reply, Márfa Timoféevna became seriously frightened and grieved.—"But thou dost not know, my darling,"—she began to try to prevail upon her;—"what sort of a life they lead in convents! Why, my own one, they will feed thee with green hemp-oil; they will put on thee coarse, awfully coarse linen; they will make thee go about cold; thou canst not endure all that, Lízotchka. All that is the traces of Agáfya in thee; it was she who led thee astray. Why, she began by living her life, living a gay life; do thou live thy life also. Let me, at least, die in peace, and then do what thou wilt. And who ever heard of any one going into a convent, all on account of such a goat's beard—the Lord forgive me!—on account of a man? Come, if thy heart is so heavy, go away on a journey, pray to a saint, have a prayer-service said, but don't put

the black cowl on thy head, my dear little father, my dear little mother. . . . ."

And Márfa Timoféevna began to weep bitterly.

Liza comforted her, wiped away her tears, but remained inflexible. In her despair, Márfa Timoféevna tried to resort to threats: she would tell Liza's mother everything; but even that was of no avail. Only as a concession to the old woman's urgent entreaties, did Liza consent to defer the fulfilment of her intention for six months; in return, Márfa Timoféevna was compelled to give her her word that she would help her, and obtain the permission of Márya Dmítrievna if, at the end of six months, she had not changed her mind.

With the advent of the first cold weather, Varvára Pávlovna, despite her promise to shut herself up in the depths of the country, after providing herself with money, removed to Petersburg, where she hired a modest but pretty apartment, which had been found for her by Pánshin, who had quitted the Government of O * * * before her. During the latter part of his sojourn in O * * * he had completely fallen out of favour with Márya Dmítrievna; he had suddenly ceased to call upon her and hardly ever quitted Lavríki. Varvára Pávlovna had enslaved him, precisely

that,—enslaved him; no other word will express her unlimited, irrevocable, irresponsible power over him.

Lavrétzky passed the winter in Moscow, but in the spring of the following year the news reached him that Liza had entered the B * * * convent, in one of the most remote corners of Russia.

EPILOGUE

EIGHT years have passed. Spring has come again. . . But first, let us say a few words about the fate of Mikhalévitch, Pánshin, Mme. Lavrétzky—and take our leave of them. Mikhalévitch, after long peregrinations, has finally hit upon his real vocation: he has obtained the post of head inspector in a government institution. He is very well satisfied with his lot, and his pupils "adore" him, although they mimic him. Pánshin has advanced greatly in rank, and already has a directorship in view; he walks with his back somewhat bent: it must be the cross of the Order of Vladímir, which has been conferred upon him, that drags him forward. The official in him has, decidedly, carried the day over the artist; his still youthful face has turned quite yellow, his hair has grown thin, and he no longer sings or draws, but secretly occupies himself with literature: he has written a little comedy, in the nature of "a proverb,"—and, as every one who writes nowadays "shows up" some one or something, he has shown up in it a coquette, and he reads it surreptitiously to two or three ladies who are favourably disposed toward him. But

he has not married, although many fine opportunities of so doing have presented themselves: for this Varvára Pávlovna is responsible. As for her, she lives uninterruptedly in Paris, as of yore: Feódor Iványitch has given her a bill of exchange on himself, and bought himself free from her,—from the possibility of a second, unexpected invasion. She has grown old and fat, but it is still pretty and elegant. Every person has his own ideal: Varvára Pávlovna has found hers—in the dramatic productions of Dumas fils. She assiduously frequents the theatre where consumptive and sentimental ladies of the frail class are put on the stage; to be Mme. Doche seems to her the very apex of human felicity; one day, she declared that she desired no better lot for her daughter. It is to be hoped that fate will deliver Mademoiselle Ada from such felicity: from a rosy, plump child, she has turned into a weak-chested, pale-faced young girl; her nerves are already deranged. The number of Varvára Pávlovna's admirers has decreased; but they have not transferred their allegiance: she will, in all probability, retain several of them to the end of her life. The most ardent of them, of late, has been a certain Zakurdálo-Skubýrnikoff, one of the retired dandies of the Guards, a man of eight and thirty, of remarkably robust build. The Frenchmen who frequent Mme. Lavrétzky's salon call him *" le gros taureau de l'Ukraïne "* ;

Varvára Pávlovna never invites him to her fashionable evening gatherings, but he enjoys her favour in the fullest measure.

So . . . . eight years have passed. Again the sky is breathing forth the beaming happiness of spring; again it is smiling upon the earth and upon men; again, beneath its caress, everything has burst into blossom, into love and song. The town of O * * * has undergone very little change in the course of those eight years; but Márya Dmítrievna's house seems to have grown young: its recently painted walls shine as in welcome, and the panes of the open windows are crimsoning and glittering in the rays of the setting sun. Through these windows, out upon the street, are wafted the sounds of ringing young voices, of incessant laughter; the whole house seems bubbling with life, and overflowing the brim with merriment. The mistress of the house herself has long since gone to her grave: Márya Dmítrievna died two years after Liza's profession as a nun; and Márfa Timoféevna did not long survive her neice; they rest side by side in the town cemetery. Nastásya Kárpovna, also, is dead; the faithful old woman went, every week, for the space of several years, to pray over the ashes of her friend. . . Her time came, and her bones also were laid in the damp earth. But Márya Dmítrievna's house has not passed into the hands of strangers, has not left her family; the

nest has not been destroyed: Lyénotchka, who has become a stately, beautiful young girl, and her betrothed, a fair-haired officer of hussars; Márya Dmítrievna's son, who has just been married in Petersburg, and has come with his young wife to spend the spring in O * * * ; his wife's sister, an Institute-girl of sixteen, with brilliantly scarlet cheeks and clear eyes; Schúrotchka, who has also grown up and become pretty—these are the young folks who are making the walls of the Kalítin house re-echo with laughter and chatter. Everything about it has been changed, everything has been brought into accord with the new inhabitants. Beardless young house-servants, who grin and jest, have taken the places of the former sedate old servitors; where overgrown Róska was wont to stroll, two setters are chasing madly about, and leaping over the divans; the stable has been filled with clean-limbed amblers, high-spirited shaft-horses, fiery trace-horses [1] with braided manes, and riding-horses from the Don; the hours for breakfast, dinner, and supper have become mixed up and confused; according to the expression of the neighbours, " an unprecedented state of affairs " has been established.

On the evening of which we are speaking, the inhabitants of the Kalítin house (the oldest of them, Lyénotchka's betrothed, was only four and

[1] The trotter as shaft-horse, and the galloping side-horses of a troïka.—TRANSLATOR.

twenty) were engaged in a far from complicated, but, judging from their vigorous laughter, a very amusing game: they were running through the rooms, and catching each other; the dogs, also, were running and barking, and the canaries which hung in cages in front of the windows vied with each other in singing at the tops of their voices, increasing the uproar of ringing volleys of noise with their furious chirping. While this deafening diversion was at its very height, a mud-stained tarantás drove up to the gate, and a man of forty-five, clad in travelling garb, descended from it, and stopped short in amazement. He stood motionless for some time, swept an attentive glance over the house, passed through the gate into the yard, and slowly ascended the steps. There was no one in the anteroom to receive him; but the door of the "hall" flew wide open; through it, all flushed, bounced Schúrotchka, and instantly, in pursuit of her, with ringing laughter, rushed the whole youthful band. She came to a sudden halt and fell silent at the sight of the stranger; but the clear eyes fastened upon him were as caressing as ever, the fresh faces did not cease to smile. Márya Dmítrievna's son stepped up to the visitor, and courteously asked him what he wished.

"I am Lavrétzky,"—said the visitor.

A vigorous shout rang out in response—and not because all these young people were so ex-

tremely delighted at the arrival of the distant, almost forgotten relative, but simply because they were ready to make an uproar and rejoice on every convenient opportunity. They immediately surrounded Lavrétzky: Lyénotchka, in the quality of an old acquaintance, was the first to introduce herself, and to assure him that, in another moment, she certainly would have recognised him, and then she presented all the rest of the company, calling each one of them, including her betrothed, by his pet name. The whole throng moved through the dining-room to the drawing-room. The hangings in both rooms were different, but the furniture remained the same; Lavrétzky recognised the piano; even the same embroidery-frame was standing in the window, in the same position—and almost with the same unfinished bit of embroidery as eight years previously. They made him sit down in a comfortable easy-chair; all seated themselves decorously around him. Questions, exclamations, stories showered down without cessation.

"But it is a long time since we have seen you,"—remarked Lyénotchka, ingenuously:—"and we have not seen Varvára Pávlovna either."

"I should think so!"—interposed her brother, hurriedly. "I carried thee off to Petersburg, but Feódor Iványitch lived in the country all the time."

"Yes, and mamma has died since, you know."

"And Márfa Timoféevna,"—said Schúrotchka.

"And Nastásya Kárpovna,"—rejoined Lyénotchka.—"And M'sieu Lemm . . . . ."

"What? And is Lemm dead also?"—asked Lavrétzky.

"Yes,"—replied young Kalítin:—"he went away from here to Odessa—they say that some one decoyed him thither; and there he died."

"You do not know—whether he left any music behind him?"

"I don't know,—it is hardly probable."

All fell silent, and exchanged glances. A cloud of sadness had descended upon all the young faces.

"And Matróska is alive,"—suddenly remarked Lyénotchka.

"And Gedeónovsky is alive,"—added her brother.

At the name of Gedeónovsky a vigorous peal of laughter rang out in unison.

"Yes, he is alive, and lies just as he always did,"—went on Márya Dmítrievna's son:—"and just imagine, that naughty child there" (and he pointed at his wife's sister, the Institute-girl) "put pepper in his snuff-box yesterday."

"How he did sneeze!" exclaimed Lyénotchka:—and again a peal of irrepressible laughter rang out.

"We received news of Liza recently,"—said young Kalítin,—and again everything grew still round about:—"things are well with her,—her health is now improving somewhat."

"Is she still in the same convent?"—asked Lavrétzky, not without an effort.

"Yes, still in the same place."

"Does she write to you?"

"No, never; the news reaches us through other people."—A sudden, profound silence ensued. "The angel of silence has flown past," all said to themselves.

"Would not you like to go into the garden?" —Kalítin turned to Lavrétzky:—"it is very pretty now, although we have rather neglected it."

Lavrétzky went out into the garden, and the first thing that struck his eyes was the bench on which he had once spent with Liza a few happy moments, never to be repeated; it had grown black and crooked; but he recognised it, and his soul was seized by that feeling which has no peer in sweetness and in sorrow,—the feeling of living grief for vanished youth, for happiness which it once possessed. In company with the young people, he strolled through the alleys: the linden-trees had not grown much older and taller during the last eight years, but their shade had become more dense; on the other hand, all the shrubs had sprung upward, the raspberry-bushes had waxed strong, the hazel copse had become

entirely impenetrable, and everywhere there was an odour of thickets, forest, grass, and lilacs.

"What a good place this would be to play at puss-in-the-corner,"—suddenly cried Lyénotchka, as they entered a small, verdant glade, hemmed in by lindens:—"by the way, there are five of us."

"And hast thou forgotten Feódor Iványitch?" —her brother observed to her. . . "Or art thou not reckoning in thyself?"

Lyénotchka blushed faintly.

"But is it possible that Feódor Iványitch, at his age, can . . ."—she began.

"Please play,"—interposed Lavrétzky, hastily:—"pay no heed to me. It will be all the more agreeable to me if I know that I am not embarrassing you. And there is no need for you to bother about me; we old fellows have occupations of which you, as yet, know nothing, and which no diversion can replace: memories."

The young people listened to Lavrétzky with courteous and almost mocking respect,—exactly as though their teacher were reading them a lesson,—and suddenly all of them flew away from him, and ran over the glade; four of them took up their stand near the trees, one stood in the centre,—and the fun began.

But Lavrétzky returned to the house, went into the dining-room, approached the piano, and touched one of the keys: a faint, but pure sound

rang out, and secretly trembled in his heart: with that note began that inspired melody wherewith, long ago, on that same blissful night, Lemm, the dead Lemm, had led him to such raptures. Then Lavrétzky passed into the drawing-room, and did not emerge from it for a long time: in that room, where he had so often seen Liza, her image rose up before him more vividly than ever; it seemed to him, that he felt around him the traces of her presence; but his grief for her was exhausting and not light: there was in it none of the tranquillity which death inspires. Liza was still living somewhere, dully, far away; he thought of her as among the living, but did not recognise the young girl whom he had once loved in that pale spectre swathed in the conventual garment, surrounded by smoky clouds of incense. Lavrétzky would not have recognised himself, had he been able to contemplate himself as he mentally contemplated Liza. In the course of those eight years the crisis had, at last, been effected in his life; that crisis which many do not experience, but without which it is not possible to remain an honourable man to the end: he had really ceased to think of his own happiness, of selfish aims. He had calmed down, and—why should the truth be concealed?—he had aged, not alone in face and body, he had aged in soul; to preserve the heart youthful to old age, as some say, is difficult, and almost absurd: he may feel content who has not

lost faith in good, steadfastness of will, desire for activity. . . . Lavrétzky had a right to feel satisfied: he had become a really fine agriculturist, he had really learned to till the soil, and he had toiled not for himself alone; in so far as he had been able, he had freed from care and established on a firm foundation the existence of his serfs.

Lavrétzky emerged from the house into the garden: he seated himself on the familiar bench —and in that dear spot, in the face of the house, where he had, on the last occasion, stretched out his hands in vain to the fatal cup in which seethes and sparkles the wine of delight,—he, a solitary, homeless wanderer,—to the sounds of the merry cries of the younger generation which had already superseded him,—took a survey of his life. His heart was sad, but not heavy and not very sorrowful: he had nothing which he had need to regret or be ashamed of. "Play on, make merry, grow on, young forces,"—he thought, and there was no bitterness in his meditations:—"life lies before you, and it will be easier for you to live: you will not be compelled, as we have been, to seek your road, to struggle, to fall, and to rise to your feet again amid the gloom; we have given ourselves great trouble, that we might remain whole,—and how many of us have failed in that! —but you must do deeds, work,—and the blessing of old fellows like me be upon you. But all that

remains for me, after to-day, after these emotions, is to make my final reverence to you, and, although with sadness, yet without envy, without any dark feelings, to say, in view of the end, in view of God who is awaiting me: 'Long live solitary old age! Burn thyself out, useless life!'"

Lavrétzky rose softly, and softly went away; no one noticed him, no one detained him; the merry cries resounded more loudly than ever in the garden behind the green, dense wall of lofty lindens. He seated himself in his tarantás, and ordered the coachman to drive home, and not to press the horses hard.

"And the end?" perchance some dissatisfied reader will say. "And what became of Lavrétzky? of Liza?" But what can one say about people who are still alive, but who have already departed from the earthly arena,—why revert to them? They say that Lavrétzky paid a visit to that distant convent where Liza had hidden herself—and saw her. In going from one choir to the other, she passed close to him—passed with the even, hurriedly-submissive gait of a nun—and did not cast a glance at him; only the lashes of the eye which was turned toward him trembled almost imperceptibly, and her haggard face was bowed a little lower than usual—and the fingers of her clasped hands, interlaced with her rosary,

were pressed more tightly to one another. What did they both think,—what did they both feel? Who knows? Who shall say? There are moments in life, there are feelings . . . we can only indicate them,—and pass by.

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